

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 370 452

FL 800 774

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TITLE A Guide for the Volunteer Tutor.
INSTITUTION Lutheran Children and Family Service, Philadelphia, Pa.
SPONS AGENCY Department of Education, Washington, DC.; Pennsylvania State Dept. of Education, Harrisburg. Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education.
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 144p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Achievement Tests; Adult Basic Education; Adult Education; Class Activities; Classroom Techniques; Cloze Procedure; Cultural Differences; *Curriculum Development; Diagnostic Tests; *English (Second Language); Grammar; Language Skills; Limited English Speaking; Mathematics Skills; Pattern Drills (Language); Prewriting; Reading Instruction; Reading Readiness; Role Playing; *Second Language Instruction; Student Evaluation; Student Placement; Teaching Guides; Test Construction; *Tutors; Vocabulary Development; Vocational English (Second Language); *Volunteers; Writing Instruction

IDENTIFIERS Total Physical Response

ABSTRACT

The guide is designed for volunteer tutors of English as a second language (ESL). It consists of two parts: the guide itself, offering principles and methods for ESL instruction, and a report of the guide's development. The guide begins with by outlining basic principles and classroom considerations of ESL tutoring. The second chapter discusses the role that cultural differences may play in language instruction, and the third chapter offers guidance for establishing realistic short- and long-term goals. Chapter four looks at issues in testing (placement, diagnostic, achievement) and in developing tests. The fifth chapter provides guidelines for placing students in skill level categories, and the sixth suggests competencies corresponding to those categories, for purposes of curriculum development. Teaching techniques and specific ESL methodologies are then described in greater detail. Contains 10 references. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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A GUIDE FOR THE VOLUNTEER TUTOR



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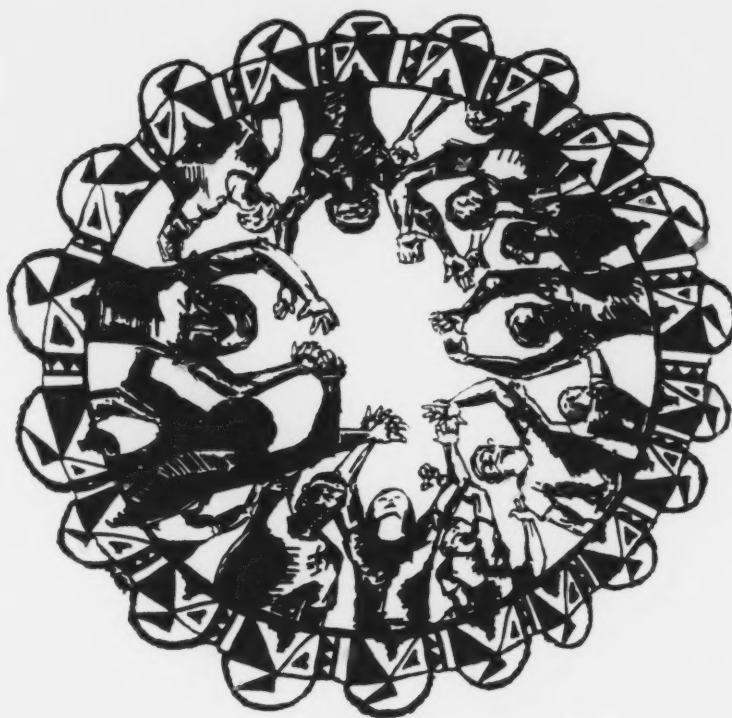
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A GUIDE FOR THE VOLUNTEER TUTOR

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PA 98 - 3038

FY 1992 - 93

\$14,971

A Guide for the Volunteer Tutor was supported in part by the United States Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the United States Department of Education or the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and no official endorsement should be inferred.

ADVANCE
PDE Resource Center
Pennsylvania Department of Education
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Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

FL 800774

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following individuals whose support and assistance helped make *A Guide for the Volunteer Tutor* possible:

Rev. William G. Erat, Executive Director, and Harriet J. Brener, Director of Program Development, of Lutheran Children & Family Service, for displaying extraordinary faith in a novice author such as myself, and for realizing the value of a training resource for first-time tutors working with low level limited English speakers.

Harry Ringel, whose expertise, advice and ongoing interest over the past 18 months were integral in the initial development of the concept of *A Guide for the Volunteer Tutor* and, ultimately, its realization.

Jonna Detweiler, John Lobron and Alison Roberts, for their invaluable contributions to this manual and their commitment to the empowerment of recent refugees and immigrants.

JJB

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PREFACE

Many recent immigrants and refugees must contend with a variety of barriers as they attempt to become more complete participants in our society. Language and literacy skills, housing, transportation, child care and employment are but just a few of the barriers that confront recent arrivals to the United States.

Many educational and social service agencies, including Lutheran Children & Family Service (LCFS), have begun to rely increasingly upon volunteers to assist immigrants and refugees in breaking down the barriers to literacy and self-sufficiency.

Each year LCFS provides services to more than 4500 clients, 4000 of whom are recent refugees and immigrants. Approximately 700 students from 35 different countries receive English as a Second Language instruction. Programs are funded through the Pennsylvania Departments of Public Welfare and Education and reach students in Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia

counties. Many other potential students, however, are unable to access these programs for a variety of reasons: lack of transportation, family obligations, conflicting work schedules and eligibility requirements. Some students have special needs that cannot be met in large groups; others feel uncomfortable and inhibited in a classroom setting.

For the past several years, LCFS has sought to provide on-going training to volunteer tutors in order to improve the language and literacy skills of individuals who are unable to take advantage of centrally located programs. Since 1991 more than 100 volunteers have been recruited and placed with students. For the most part, volunteers have been first time tutors (67%) and students have been low level literate or illiterate limited English speakers (71%).

A Guide for the Volunteer Tutor marks LCFS' first attempt to formally compile a collection of basic concepts related to the instruction of English as a Second Language for inexperienced tutors of low level literate and illiterate students.

The goals of this manual are threefold. First of all, the primary goal of *A Guide for the Volunteer Tutor* is to assist students who are unable to access centrally located ESL and adult literacy programs in overcoming the barriers to literacy and self-sufficiency.

Secondly, this manual seeks to provide tutors with a broad spectrum of knowledge and skills that will empower them to serve as a more active resource for their students in ways that go beyond reading and writing. As many ESL teachers and tutors can attest, the needs of low level limited English proficient adults are seldom limited exclusively to language and literacy skills.

Thirdly, *A Guide for the Volunteer Tutor* serves a practical purpose as the core text of a comprehensive 12-hour Tutor Training Program designed to be implemented not only at LCFS, but at any agency or site that wishes to undertake such a program. The ultimate goal of all ESL instructors and any adult basic education resource is the ultimate empowerment of the students themselves.

I. SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES

Tutoring is a unique situation that enables two individuals to come together to work towards a common goal: the student wants to learn a skill which the tutor has mastered.¹ It also provides an opportunity for two people to get to know one another. While the student is learning to read, write and speak the language, the tutor and the student are learning about each other and their respective cultures. One-on-one tutoring makes the ESL learning experience more personalized, intimate and non-threatening, increasing the effectiveness of instruction.

As an ESL tutor you already possess the basic skills needed to assist a recent immigrant in learning the English language -- you have an inside knowledge of the English language, its general rules and inner workings, and many of its social and cultural nuances. More importantly, you have a desire to assist a recent immigrant in becoming self-sufficient.

Nonetheless, there are some basic ideas that you should keep in mind when tutoring a limited English speaker. Many of these

principles will be dealt with more extensively in subsequent chapters of this manual.

ASSESS STUDENT LEVEL - Before tutoring actually begins, the student should receive some kind of initial placement test. This test will allow the tutor to determine what level of instruction is most appropriate for the student. In addition, it will permit the tutor to pinpoint any weaknesses that require attention and to decide what kind of ESL instruction to follow. More information concerning assessment of student needs, testing, levels of competency and ESL curriculum will be provided in Chapters III, IV, V and VI.

SPEAK NATURALLY - When tutoring, use a natural tone of voice with the student. Speak slowly, but normally, and remember not to shout. Frequently ESL tutors and teachers assume that by speaking **LOUDLY** and very slowly the student will comprehend more readily. This just isn't true. The student will not learn more quickly if you use a louder tone of voice or speak too slowly. In fact, you may intimidate the student if you speak too aggressively, and you may put the student to sleep if you speak too slowly.

CONTROL LANGUAGE, VOCABULARY AND GRAMMAR - In addition, the tutor should try to control the complexity and quantity of the language that he or she uses with the student. When teaching, try to concentrate on topics (such as employment, shopping, health care, for instance) and competencies (such as the ability to complete a job application or use coupons while shopping) and not just grammar, sentence structure and vocabulary. These topics and competencies will form short-term goals for the student. Grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure should generally be taught within the context of

Some Basic Principles

the topic or competency. Furthermore, it is often beneficial if the teacher previews any grammar and vocabulary before actually presenting it within a lesson. More information on basic teaching techniques, ESL methodology and lesson planning can be found in chapters VII and XIII.

REINFORCE LEARNING - Take your time when teaching. Don't be afraid to repeat and review. Once again, the tutor should strive to reinforce reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. With students who possess a low level of literacy skills, it is virtually impossible to review too much. Reinforcement over a period of time will only assist the student.

INDUCE STUDENT PARTICIPATION - Adult ESL students generally have an immediate need to learn and utilize the English language. Although it is frequently difficult to elicit inference and opinion from low level students, try to induce the student to talk, to respond, to ask questions. As a rule of thumb, an ESL tutor or teacher should not spend more than 50% of the session speaking. In order to learn the language, the student needs to use it.

BE AWARE OF CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS - Most recent refugees and immigrants also need to learn what is and isn't socially acceptable in their new homeland. Though social and cultural values are a large part of literacy and survival skills classes, as a tutor you should make a concerted effort not to interject your personal values and attitudes. Many typical American values are perceived as negative in other cultures. The tutor should be aware of this, and should, in turn, accept the attitudes and values that the student brings to the tutoring environment. If you find it necessary or beneficial to work

with the student on certain cultural elements, it may be preferable to do so within a compare-and-contrast setting where the student and the tutor investigate and communicate the differences and similarities between their respective cultures. This concept and the impact of cultural differences will be more fully explained in Chapter II.

DON'T OVEREMPHASIZE GRAMMATICAL CORRECTNESS - When correcting, try to provide the student with positive feedback. Don't correct every mistake the student makes, and when correcting, wait for an appropriate moment to call the student's attention to the error. In an ESL tutoring situation with low level limited English speakers, the tutor should be more concerned with fluency -- the ability to communicate relevant information that is, at the very least, comprehensible -- than with grammatical correctness. In other words, it is often quite possible to express oneself very well without using 'correct' vocabulary and grammar. Conversely, correct grammar and vocabulary do not always ensure that a person is expressing himself or herself fully.

BE AWARE OF THE AFFECTIVE ROLE OF THE TUTOR - The tutor should strive to become a resource for the student and to establish a comfortable, supportive relationship, as well as a climate of mutual respect. This is of vital importance, as the student will display greater motivation and progress more quickly in an environment of trust and cooperation. Adult students possess many skills, experiences, and values that should be respected. It is also important to show an interest in the student's personal life. Make sure to learn the student's name as quickly as possible. Ask basic questions about the student's background -- family, occupation, where the student is from, etc. Also, show an interest in the student's welfare.

Some Basic Principles

Did he or she have a good or bad day? Does the student have any plans for the day or week?

HONOR THE PROTOCOL OF TUTORING - Finally, the tutor and the student should be aware of some of the limitations that may make the tutor-student relationship more difficult. These problems include time and scheduling conflicts, difficulties in determining an appropriate location for tutoring, communication problems and cultural differences. Exchange telephone numbers with the student and encourage active communication of changes in schedule and cancellations of appointments. Nothing is more frustrating than showing up for a tutoring session with no student there, or for the student to wait for a tutor who doesn't come. Keep in mind that one of the most important qualities that a tutor can possess is flexibility.

Notes

1. National Indochinese Clearinghouse/Center for Applied Linguistics, *Indochinese Refugee Education Guide #1*, p. 1.

II. THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

INTRODUCTION

As an ESL tutor you will be helping an individual to communicate in a new language. In the process, you will be teaching and learning, as well, a new culture.¹

Cultural differences will be apparent from the moment you first meet with your student; they are not limited solely to language, but extend to the way people perceive their environment, how they eat, sleep, dress and live, non-verbal communication (gestures and body language, for instance), attitudes, values and expectations.

We frequently fall into one of two traps when interacting with individuals from other cultures:

1. We believe that our values and attitudes are "correct" and desirable. In addition, we often assume that people of other cultures share our values and attitudes.
2. We assume that people of other cultures are completely different and share few or none of our values and attitudes.

The Impact of Cultural Differences

In most instances, the truth lies somewhere between these two extremes; the tutor should strive not to fall prey to such crude stereotypes. Both tutor and student are the product of historical and cultural influences. An effective tutor will learn that members of one culture cannot be judged by the standards of another.

Some values and attitudes, such as the desire for self-actualization or self-fulfillment, are universal (though they may be defined differently by different cultures) and may be shared among different cultures, while many others, such as materialism and informality are viewed negatively by much of the world, and may not be shared.

An effective ESL tutor will become aware of the values and attitudes that distinguish his or her own culture. At the same time, the tutor must be sensitive to the differences in behaviors, attitudes and values that each student brings to the tutoring environment.²

It is important to recognize how culture influences behavior and attitudes, and how these affect the student in learning the English language and adapting to life in the United States. For example, in many third world cultures (such as Cambodia or Vietnam), child rearing, cooking and cleaning are seen as the **full-time** responsibilities of a married woman. Frequently, a woman (regardless of the family's economic situation) will not seek outside employment because of these duties. This situation, in turn, will have a direct impact on how the woman adapts to life in her new homeland, how quickly she learns English, etc.

As a volunteer tutor, you may be one of the major sources of information on appropriate cultural behavior for the student.³ It is very

important to help the student recognize and comprehend social and cultural aspects of the language that he or she is learning. A prime example can be found in the Asian tradition of "saving face" and "non-confrontation" (student inevitably responds "yes" to questions regardless of the facts). Whereas this trait is deemed acceptable in one culture, it may be perceived as deceitful in our culture. At the same time, however, it is important to value a student's cultural heritage.

Rather than attempt to identify the countless "cultural differences" that could possibly confront a tutor, it is often of much greater benefit (and less complicated) to examine one's *own* cultural values. The following list was prepared by an organization that provides cultural sensitivity training to individuals entering the United States:

13 Values that Most Americans Share

The basic behaviors of a people or a culture make sense only when seen through the basic behaviors, assumptions and values of that particular group. Although many Americans feel that each and every individual is so unique that it would be impossible to develop a definitive list describing typical American values, Meridian House International has identified a core of 13 values that most Americans share. When compared with the values of a more traditional country, the following matrix is produced:

U.S. VALUE	OPPOSING VALUE
1. Control over Nature	Fate
2. Change	Tradition
3. Control over Time	Human Interaction
4. Equality	Hierarchy/Status
5. Individualism/Privacy	Group Welfare
6. Concept of Self-Help	Birthright Inheritance
7. Competition	Cooperation
8. Future Orientation	Past Orientation
9. Work Orientation	"Being" Orientation
10. Informality	Formality
11. Directness/Openness	Indirectness
12. Practicality/Efficiency	Idealism
13. Materialism	Detachment

Source: L. Robert Kahn, *The Values Americans Live By*, Meridian House International, 1984.

The Impact of Cultural Differences

Needless to say, the 13 values listed above are viewed positively by most Americans. Many, however, are viewed negatively by much of the world. A case in point is the concept of *equality*. The United States takes great pride in its ability to provide (relatively) equal access to education, employment, economic opportunity and political office regardless of gender, race, ethnic origin or religion. In much of the world (India, Iran and Pakistan for example), however, an individual's class is routinely determined at birth.

The generalized quality of the above terms must be acknowledged; nonetheless the tutor must recognize and accept the obvious conflict created by a variety of cultural values and attitudes which are perceived positively by some and negatively by others. In the case of recent immigrants this situation is exacerbated by the fact that immigrant and non-immigrant alike are frequently unaware of any such conflict.

EXPLORING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

By its very nature, a learner-centered curriculum approach lends itself to the exploration of cultural differences. Instruction is based on the student's needs and goals; reading, writing, speaking and listening skills are taught in context and educational materials are relevant to the student's life.

It is possible for both tutor and student to develop a greater awareness of cultural differences by exploring their respective cultures within the tutoring environment. This may also be the most practical way for the tutor to become familiar with the values, attitudes and culture of the student and the most effective way to teach the student about the culture of the United States.

The Language Experience Approach and Role Playing techniques discussed in Chapter VII are particularly effective in dealing with cultural concerns. Some examples that may be incorporated into the lesson plan include family structures, male/female roles, politics, traditions, history, holidays, foods, eating habits, marriage and body language.

Notes

1. Hjelt, M. Christine and Stewart, Georgia E., *Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*, p. 12.
2. Spinthourakis, Julia A., "Cultural Considerations in Teaching ESL," in *Adult ESL Instruction: A Sourcebook*, ed. Lucy Madsen Guglielmino, p. 8.
3. Hjelt and Stewart, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

III. ESTABLISHING REALISTIC GOALS

You would not get into your car, turn on the engine and begin driving without first knowing where you were going. In much the same way, it does not make sense to begin tutoring without knowing what your destination is, without first having established some basic goals for the student.

When dealing with low level literate and illiterate students, it is important for the tutor to define "goals" as functional competencies that will enable students to live more complete lives and to participate more fully in their new homeland. Competencies such as using public transportation, reading a map, understanding traffic signs, etc. are appropriate for low level students. Nonetheless, the tutor should include a wide variety of subject matter from different sources that emphasize reading, writing, listening and speaking skills in the context of the functional competency being studied. There are three basic steps involved in assisting an individual to determine what his or her interests and goals are:

1. REVIEW STUDENT'S PERSONAL HISTORY - The first goal is to review important aspects of the student's personal history, including

country of origin, language(s) spoken (Roman, Non-Roman or no written alphabet?), age, level of education (literate, semi-literate or illiterate?), work experience, family situation and any other pertinent information that may provide a clue to an individual's level of literacy and possible goals and interests.

SOME QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK

1. What country does the student come from?
2. How old is the student?
3. How many years of formal education does the student possess?
4. What did the student study in school?
5. What languages does the student speak?
6. What kind of alphabet does he or she use?
7. What kind of work has the student done?
8. What work skills does the student possess?
9. What responsibilities does the student have at home?
10. Does the student have access to a support network -- friends or relatives who live nearby and are able to help as needed?

This information is may be obtained from registration forms, through a translator or within the first two or three meetings between student and tutor. Personal information is important because it also reveals a great deal about a student's personality, culture, values and expectations. Knowing a student's personal and cultural background will also provide the tutor with a framework from which to begin establishing goals.

2. ASSESS LEVEL OF COMPETENCY IN ENGLISH - The second step is to assess an individual's level of competency in the English language. If possible, it is also advantageous to assess a student's level of literacy in the native language, as well. If you are unable to assess native language literacy, you may use the information on level of education obtained in step one as a basic guide.

More information on testing English language competency and native language ability will be provided in Chapter IV, but please note

Establishing Realistic Goals

that most test are focused on specific skill areas or a combination of two or three skill areas (such as literacy skills, survival skills, grammar and vocabulary, etc.)

It is also very important to test the student's reading and writing skills, in addition to speaking and listening abilities. Many individuals who have resided in the United States for a number of years may be quite proficient at speaking and listening comprehension, but unable to read or write (possibly in the native language, as well). Conversely, some individuals who have studied English abroad possess good reading and writing skills, yet may have difficulty in the areas of speaking and listening comprehension.

3. ESTABLISH SHORT AND LONG-TERM GOALS - The third, and most difficult, step is to establish short and long-term goals for the student. Ideally, the tutor should collaborate with the student to set these goals. This may be accomplished in person or through a translator. Most recent immigrants, however, lack the knowledge, awareness and communication skills necessary to establish realistic goals. All too frequently the student will respond that his or her goal is "to learn better English."

In this instance, the tutor needs to analyze the information obtained in steps one and two in order to make some inferences as to the basic goals of the student. Inferring goals may seem especially daunting for the first time tutor, but one of the tutor's primary responsibilities is to serve as a resource for the student. As a resource, the tutor may need to make some objective decisions regarding the appropriate path to follow with the student. When inferring goals, it will be helpful if the tutor ask the following questions:

DETERMINING STUDENT GOALS

1. Where does the student need to use English (school, work, home?)
2. In what kind of situations will the student use the language?
3. How will the student use the language most often (orally, writing)?
4. What social and cultural information will the student need?
5. What does the student want to study?

After answering these questions and reviewing the student's personal information, the tutor must take into consideration the amount of time that the individual has available for tutoring and his or her access to other resources (such as housing, child care, employment, medical care, etc.). Once a tutor is familiar with the student's background, he or she can begin to establish long and short-term goals for an individual. The student's immediate English language needs should be taken into consideration at this point. Short-term goals generally build either sequentially (much like a ladder or set of steps) or synchronistically (much like a circle or spiral), to an ultimate long-term goal. More information on coordinating goals and lesson plans will be found in Chapter VIII. For now, consider this one example:

GOAL: EMPLOYMENT

COMPETENCIES

Interviewing	Writing a Resume
Asking for Assistance	Filling out Applications
Understanding Basic Work Rules	Finding Job Openings
Asking Questions	Following Instructions
Being a Responsible Worker	Discovering Jobs & Job Titles

In this case, two initial desired competencies -- *Being a Responsible Worker* and *Discovering Jobs and Job Titles* -- serve to empower the student, to enable him or her to make a more informed decision regarding employment (What kind of job do I want? What did I do in my native country? What is a labor market? What work

Establishing Realistic Goals

skills do I possess? What kind of job am I qualified for?). The other competencies provide the student with the basic skills needed to reach the ultimate goal of employment.

It may take the tutor and student six or eight months (possibly more for a very low level student) to master each of the individual competencies leading to employment. Keep in mind that the teaching of the competencies which form the student's short-term goals can be "layered" -- one may be introduced while another is being reviewed. It may be necessary to administer a progress test at this point to determine if the student is ready to move on.

In addition to inferring a student's goals, it may be possible for the tutor and student to use their initial tutoring encounters to develop and establish goals cooperatively. Since recent immigrants frequently lack the skills necessary to make appropriate decisions regarding goals, and since the tutor is as yet unfamiliar with the student's needs, the tutor may prefer to set an initial short-term goal that will enable both of them to clarify the student's values, attitudes and interests. By asking the student to identify factors that make him or her unique (age, race, religion, culture, gender, friends, family situation, abilities, likes, dislikes, education, health, and so on), the tutor promotes student self-awareness. At the same time, the tutor and the student might follow a survival skills curriculum that promotes awareness of the student's new culture. After completing this initial short-term goal, the student should be able to express goals more realistically.

Goals should be functional in nature and should reinforce reading, writing, speaking and listening comprehension skills. Short-

term goals should not be set more than a month or two in the future and student progress should be evaluated before moving on to the following goal. If goals are set too far into the future, the tutor runs the risk of not having enough time to make adjustments or may cover too much information during the course of tutoring.

The establishment of realistic goals is crucial because the tutor's selection of educational materials, curriculum, methodology and lesson planning will hinge upon the student's goals. Once a teacher has established what a student's level and language needs are, it is not enough merely to pick out a textbook which appears more or less to present skills and information that are appropriate for the student. It is also quite inappropriate to choose a textbook before having assessed what a student's goals and language needs are. many teachers and tutors commit the cardinal sin of trying to adapt the student to the textbook and educational materials being used instead of adapting the educational materials and textbook to the needs of the student. In other words, after establishing goals, the tutor should build his or her instruction to fit the needs of the student.

In short, establishing realistic goals entails determining what the student's abilities and needs are. After compiling this information, the tutor must then devise a series of competencies (short-term goals) that ultimately echo, or even shape, the student's long-term goal.

IV. TESTING

Within most ESL programs, three kinds of tests are administered: placement tests, diagnostic tests and progress tests. Placement testing is conducted to decide what level of instruction will best suit a student's needs and abilities; it is predictive, and makes no attempt to analyze student needs. Diagnostic testing identifies specific areas where a student needs assistance. Progress testing is used to evaluate a student's progress and the results of our teaching.

Testing does not necessarily need to be performed on a formal basis. Much can be done informally, especially in the areas of diagnostic and progress testing on a daily basis. Whether testing is conducted formally or informally, it is absolutely essential to first determine what skills and competencies we wish to measure. A checklist of basic skills for students with low levels of literacy skills could include the following:

SOME BASIC SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

Ability to write left to right, top to bottom
Days of the week, months, etc.
Knowledge of the alphabet
Ability to provide personal information orally
Knowledge of some simple sight words
Ability to write personal information (form)
Knowledge of consonant & vowel sounds

Numbers from 1 - 100
Parts of the body
Ability to handle money
Knowledge of basic math
Ability to distinguish different shapes
Ability to tell time
Ability to respond to simple questions

PLACEMENT TESTING

The basic rationale behind placement testing is that the teacher or tutor needs to know what a student knows. ESL tests traditionally measure only the non-native speaker's English language ability compared to that of a native English speaker.

One of the basic flaws with this method of determining language proficiency is that it is impossible to compare an adult reading at a third grade level with a child reading at that level. While recognition of vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure may be comparable, the level of comprehension and maturity of an adult are usually much superior to that of a child. Conversely, an American child or adult reading at a third grade level would normally possess a much greater knowledge of English idioms and the social and cultural nuances of the language than a recent immigrant.

The same problems arise when using the same placement test to evaluate the skills of both students of limited English proficiency and adult learners in a basic skills/literacy program. The reading level "labels" placed on the latter simply don't fit comfortably on the former.

There are many components to a good placement test. In general, however, most effective tests consist of a brief oral section (usually an interview) and a longer written section. As stated previously, successful placement tests will assess reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. A variety of questions dealing with vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure will be presented to test student knowledge. A good test must be flexible; it must be structured in such a way that it is appropriate for the low level student, as well as the

Testing

more advanced student. Most placement tests are administered by the teacher or tutor and take anywhere from 15 minutes to one hour.

Several standardized ESL placement tests exist, and while they are quite adequate for determining student level, they are frequently inflexible and require some initial training. In addition, most placement tests generally emphasize only one or two areas of competence. Some tests will focus on survival skills while others will place more emphasis on grammar and vocabulary comprehension.

A good placement test will be flexible and adaptable to the needs of the tutor and the student; the tutor will not need extensive training in order to administer the test and it will provide an accurate assessment of students with varying degrees of literacy skills. As mentioned previously, an effective placement test will assess reading, writing, speaking and listening abilities in context. In many instances, the tutor can create a short placement test that more than meets the needs of the student. A sample test used within an ESL program in Philadelphia sponsored by LCFS may be found on pages 20, 21 & 22.

The tutor may also choose to supplement an English language placement test by testing the student's native language literacy. Several standardized assessment instruments are available for this purpose. One of the most reliable and easiest to administer is the HELP Test, which is published by Alemany Press and available at LCFS. This assessment instrument measures the level of literacy in any of a variety of native languages through a brief reading sample and pictures. Students demonstrate comprehension through responses which can be measured by the teacher or tutor regardless of the student's native language.

ABE ESL LITERACY PROGRAM
DIAGNOSTIC TEST

Name _____
Total Test Score _____
Placement Level _____

ABE ESL LITERACY PROGRAM
DIAGNOSTIC TEST

I. ORAL EVALUATION (INTERVIEW)

1. What is your name?
2. What is your address?
3. How old are you?
4. What was your job in your country?
5. How long have you been living in this country?

TOTAL _____

II. ORAL EVALUATION (TIME AND MONEY)

1. What time is it?
2. How much money is here?



TOTAL _____

Section I tests listening comprehension and speaking skills.

Section II tests knowledge of time, numbers and familiarity with money and U.S. currency.

Testing

ABE/ESL Diagnostic Test
Page 2

READING EVALUATION

p f e z a B J E R N

TOTAL _____

READING EVALUATION (SIGHT WORDS)

6 12 14 40 20 2000 95 \$195.00 1/2

TOTAL _____

READING EVALUATION

1. Do you know my last name? _____
2. In America many people speak English. _____
3. Never watch young children without thought. _____

TOTAL _____

WRITING EVALUATION

Please write answers to these questions:

1. What is your first name? _____
2. What is your age? _____
3. $8 + 6 =$ _____
4. $16 - 7 =$ _____
5. $11 \times 9 =$ _____
6. How many states are there in the United States of America? _____
7. What is the area code for Philadelphia? _____

TOTAL _____

9/4/91

Reading Evaluation tests basic letter recognition and pronunciation of the alphabet (capital and small letters).

Number Evaluation assesses knowledge of one, two and three digit numbers, as well as money (\$), decimals (.00) and fractions (1/2).

Sight Word Evaluation tests vocabulary knowledge and reading ability (knowledge of consonant and vowel sounds, etc.) -- note that sentences are graded in difficulty.

Writing Evaluation assesses reading comprehension, writing ability, simple math skills, some basic survival skills (number of states and area code) and cultural awareness.

ABE/ESL Diagnostic Test
Page 3

READING COMPREHENSION

Sam and Helen went to New York by car. They left Philadelphia at 8 a.m. They drove at 55 mph on the highway. At 9:00, their car broke down. While Helen stayed with the car, Sam walked to a pay phone. He called their friend Ralph in New York. Sam had no change, so he called Ralph collect.

"Will you accept a collect call from Sam?" the operator said, when Ralph answered the phone.

"Yes, I will," answered Ralph.

"Hello, Ralph! Our car broke down on the highway. Can you come pick us up?"

"Sure. Where are you?"

"Near Exit 8A," replied Sam.

"That's pretty far. But I'll be there as soon as I can!"

1. Sam and Helen's destination was
A. New York
B. Philadelphia
C. Exit 8A
2. How fast were they going?
A. 9:00
B. 55 mph
C. one hour
3. How long did they drive before the car broke down?
A. 9:00
B. 55 mph
C. one hour
4. How did Sam get in touch with his friend?
A. by car
B. by phone
C. on the highway
5. Who stayed with the car?
A. Helen
B. Ralph
C. the operator
6. Who spoke to Ralph first?
A. the operator
B. Helen
C. Sam
7. Sam called collect because
A. he had no money
B. he had no change
C. Ralph is rich
8. Where did the car break down?
A. at Exit 8A
B. in New York
C. near Exit 8A
9. When did Ralph plan to come pick them up?
A. as soon as possible
B. right away
C. far away

This Reading Evaluation is essentially an optional part of the diagnostic test. It is only administered to distinguish intermediate students from those at the advanced level.

Testing

DIAGNOSTIC TESTING

Periodic diagnostic testing allows the tutor to identify a student's strengths and weaknesses. Diagnostic testing, as opposed to evaluative testing which is conducted *after* a lesson has been taught, is generally conducted before the student begins a particular unit of study.

There are several other methods of diagnostic testing, both formal and informal, that relate to specific lesson units. For example, before giving a reading lesson to a student, the instructor may wish to preview orally key vocabulary to assess student awareness of words that may slow down a lesson. Similarly, instructor and student may review examples of a particular grammar concept before the lesson begins. By determining student familiarity with a grammar concept beforehand, the instructor may readily adjust the level of teaching to fit the student's existing knowledge.

In many instances an initial placement test may serve the purpose of a diagnostic test. The tutor should not only review the test to provide the student with a score or to assign him or her to a class level, but should also analyze the results to determine if areas of difficulty generally exist (literacy skills, basic math skills, word order, or perhaps concrete competencies such as telling time or reading a map). Problem areas may be dealt with in subsequent meetings between instructor and student and incorporated into the lesson plan.

With students of a higher skill level, the tutor can administer a **Student Self-Diagnostic Survey**. Administered before tutoring begins and at certain intervals, this survey allows the student to reflect on and express language growth. Basically, a Student Self-Diagnostic Survey involves creating a booklet or chart for the student that lists

several basic competencies (much like those on page 37) such as "Reading a Bus Schedule" or "Telling Time." Initially, the tutor can assist the student to grade himself or herself. At periodic intervals (maybe monthly) the student can self-administer a grade depending on progress. As the student masters different competencies, and as the tutor presents new competencies, these can be added to the Student Self-Diagnostic Survey. As the student's oral language skills increase, the tutor can interview the student periodically to determine satisfaction. At this point the tutor and the student can work together to determine what will be taught.

PROGRESS TESTING

Formal standardized tests (mass-produced tests that are designed to assess specific competencies) are not recommended as progress tests due to the nature of tutoring. Each tutor and student is different; people have varying amounts of time available to study and learn in different ways at different paces. Also, since the tutor is tailoring instruction to fit the needs of the student, no two students will be studying the same thing. Due to these limitations, it is usually preferable to prepare a progress test for a specific student based on what has been emphasized during tutoring.

Another method of evaluating student progress consists of devising incremental, competency-based functional goals measuring student performance. Progress towards specific goals can be tested traditionally or measured as student's meet their goals directly. Examples of basic competencies include such functionally-based goals as shopping in a supermarket or using a post office. More advanced competencies might involve finding employment or obtaining a driver's license.

Testing

Keep in mind that these goals can also be broken down into smaller goals, such as buying stamps or mailing packages at the post office. Concrete evidence of progress is demonstrated as the student reaches his or her goals. A number of smaller, incremental goals may also lead the student to an ultimate, less obviously tangible goal. A step-by-step plan such as the employment plan on page 14 is a good example of this process.

Many tutors and teachers who feel uncomfortable designing a progress test (or who lack the time to prepare one) often utilize their original placement test a second time to evaluate student progress. Although this is a straightforward method for assessing progress, use of the original placement is not recommended due to the fact that it generally will not measure progress towards the student's individual goals. The tutor should be working with specific skills and competencies that the student needs, not those found on the placement test. In addition, the tutor can never be sure that improvement has occurred due to what the student has learned or through repeated exposure to the test.

Finally, the tutor may assess progress more informally (but very effectively) by maintaining a file of activities and exercises completed by the student. By comparing results over a period of time, the tutor and student may gain a fairly accurate idea of progress, especially in the areas of reading comprehension and writing skills.

CREATING YOUR OWN PROGRESS TEST

The most effective and reliable method of measuring student progress involves creating a test that assesses mastery of the specific skills and competencies that the student has been studying. Progress

testing should be conducted regularly; it is not unreasonable to expect the tutor to test semi-weekly or monthly depending on the frequency of encounters. At any rate, tests need not be presented to a student as such. There is no need for the tutor to "make a big deal" out of a progress test. ESL students are generally receptive to learning; instructors create periodic monitoring through progress tests.

Creating an effective progress test consists of four basic steps:¹

1. Identify the skill areas that have been taught.
2. Identify vocabulary, sentence structure and grammar (language aspects) that have been taught.
3. Develop items that test skill areas and language aspects.
4. Make sure that items are of an appropriate level for the student.

IDENTIFYING SKILL AREAS

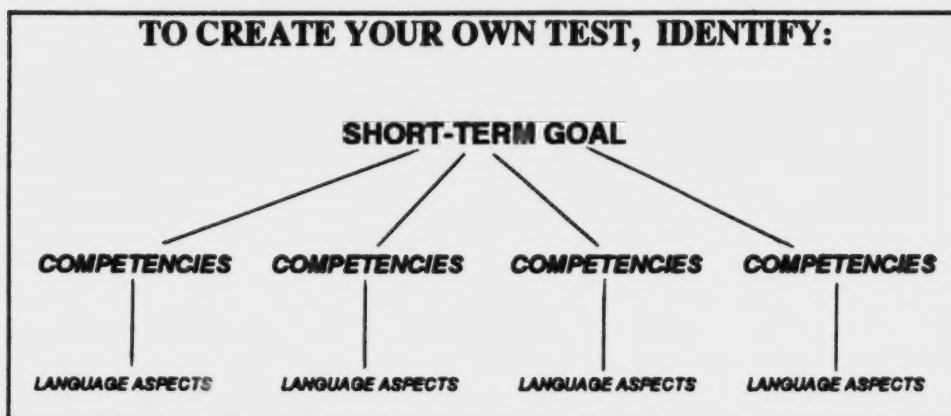
What functional skills and competencies has the tutor taught? In what kind of situations is the student expected to use the skills and language being taught? Any of the short-term goals that we have mentioned previously is comprised of a number of skills and competencies. Using public transportation (short-term goal), for example, includes the ability to read and understand maps and schedules, tell and calculate time, ask directions and handle money (for starters). Depending on the situation, the student may be expected to use any combination of reading, writing, speaking or listening skills.

IDENTIFYING LANGUAGE ASPECTS

What grammar (parts of speech, verb tenses, etc.), sentence structure, vocabulary and expressions are integral to the functional skills and competencies being taught? For example, if the tutor is

Testing

teaching the student to use public transportation (short-term goal), the ability to ask directions and read maps (skill areas) is essential. Asking directions and reading maps involves the use of specific vocabulary related to maps, directions and public transportation (north, south, east west, bus, train, block, street, map, bus station, corner, traffic light, stop sign, etc.), associated sentence structure (question form...Where is the bus station?), grammar (prepositions of place...on the corner, across the street, etc.) and expressions (to catch a bus, to miss a bus, to get on or get off, etc.).



DEVELOPING TEST ITEMS

A challenging progress test will be made up of a variety of questions and items that assess reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in context. Effective test questions can include:

Multiple Choice (Cloze) Questions

Fill in the Blanks

Dictation

True-False Questions

Reading Comprehension

Test questions should take advantage of real-life materials as much as possible; questions are much more effective and relevant

when presented in context. For instance, if the tutor and student are working on public transportation, a copy of a map or schedule may be used as the basis of multiple choice, fill in the blank or true-false questions. Of course, the schedule chosen should not be too difficult for the student, nor should it contain elements of knowledge that have not been covered in lessons.

SUNNYVILLE BUS COMPANY						
SCHEDULE: LIVINGTON TO COWTOWN						
	Livington	Mount Wood	Everett	Waterton	Hartington	Cowtown
AM	6:04	6:19	6:26	6:36	6:42	6:51
	7:30	7:42	7:50	7:59	8:05	8:14
	9:17	9:30	9:38	9:46	9:52	10:03
	11:45	12:01	12:09	12:20	12:27	12:35

TRUE OR FALSE?

1. It takes about 15 minutes to get from Livingston to Mount Wood. ____
2. The first bus leaves Everett at 6:42. ____
3. Only 3 buses leave Livingston before noon. ____
4. Hartington comes before Cowtown. ____

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. It takes _____ to get from Mount Wood to Cowtown.
2. After 7:59, the next bus from Waterton leaves at _____.

TESTING APPROPRIATE LEVEL

While identifying skills, competencies, vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure and related expressions is a fairly simple process, it is crucial (and difficult at times) to make sure that test items and questions correspond to the student's level. Keep in mind that a properly conceived test will maximize chances for success, providing the student with an opportunity to display newly acquired skills and

Testing

competencies. A test that is too simple will not challenge the student, while a test that is too demanding will discourage the learner. Keep in mind the level of the student (from the initial placement test) and the skills and abilities that you would like the student to possess upon completion of the level (see Chapter V-- Determining Student Level).

Notes

1. Humak, Barbara A. and Spithourakis, Julia A., "Assessment: Where Are They Starting? How Are They Progressing?", in *Adult ESL Instruction: A Sourcebook*, ed. Lucy Madsen Guglielmino, p. 31.

V. DETERMINING STUDENT LEVEL

After administering and evaluating the student's initial placement test, it is then necessary to place the student into an appropriate level of instruction. Determining student level is beneficial to the tutor since, in combination with student needs and language goals, it will dictate appropriate textbooks, educational materials and lesson planning. Within programs sponsored by LCFS, students are assigned to one of the following four general levels:

1) PRE - LITERATE LEVEL

Students at this level have very limited ability (or none whatsoever) to produce oral and written English. Students usually are unable to answer even the most basic questions dealing with basic personal information (name, age, address, nationality, etc.). Pre-literate students may be able to recognize some single digit numbers, but they frequently are unable to identify and produce the letters of the alphabet or spell the most basic items of personal information. In other instances, the student may have no ability at all with our alpha-numeric system. Pre-literate students usually fall into one of the following three groups:

Determining Student Level

Three Groups of Pre-literate Students

- a) Those who use a non - Roman alphabet in their native language. This group includes students from Russia and the former Soviet Union, China, Iran, Iraq, Cambodia, Laos and Ethiopia.
- b) Those who come from countries that utilize a Roman alphabet, but who are functionally illiterate or barely literate in their native languages. This group includes individuals who come from Vietnam, Albania, Armenia and Latin American countries.
- c) Those who come from a culture that does not possess a written language. This group includes the Hmong from Vietnam and Laos.

2) BEGINNING LEVEL

Students at this level may exhibit some of the characteristics of pre-literate students (especially orally), but normally they are able to recognize the alphabet, some basic numbers, some common sight words (such as STOP and DANGER!), etc. The majority of beginning level students are capable of providing simple answers to questions regarding personal information. Their English skills are sometimes limited to simple learned phrases (for example, when asked "How are you?", they will respond "Fine, thank you" regardless of how they really feel. They demonstrate a lack of understanding of English grammar, sentence structure and verb tenses (they may only be able to operate in the simple present tense regardless of the situation). They are able to meet only the most basic of communication needs.

3) INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

Students at the intermediate level are capable of satisfying most of their basic social English needs. At this level, students are able to function with some difficulty in the community (work, shopping and other daily survival needs). Orally, students are able to follow simple instructions and to communicate in situations that are familiar to

them. They show some basic knowledge of English grammar, sentence structure and verb tenses (though they frequently make mistakes, especially when rushed or under pressure). At the intermediate level, students are able to read and understand material dealing with subjects that are familiar to them, as well as subjects that are new and unfamiliar to them with some difficulty (such as speaking with a stranger on the telephone). Students at this level are also able to write short, simple sentences and paragraphs with some errors. Pronunciation at this level is also greatly improved and students show an increasingly regular, consistent speaking pattern.

4) *ADVANCED LEVEL*

Advanced students are capable of satisfying all routine survival and social English needs. Students at this level can function with minimal problems in our society. Students are able to deal with materials that are familiar, as well as unfamiliar, to them with few or no problems. At the advanced level, students show the ability to infer many grammatical aspects of the English language and are able to use the language creatively. Students at this level are able to read, write, speak and understand everyday English with few errors.

WHAT LEVEL IS THE MOST APPROPRIATE?

Unless the tutor employs a standardized placement test which assigns students to a level based on a score, he or she must be capable of making an informed decision as to what level is most appropriate for the student.

Generally speaking, if a student is unable to recognize the alphabet, single digit numbers and cannot fill out a simple form with basic personal information (name, age, address, nationality, marital

Determining Student Level

status, etc.), he or she should begin studying at the pre-literate level. Even if the student can respond orally to questions regarding personal data and possesses some listening comprehension skills, he or she may require some literacy training if unable to read and/or write the alphabet and spell basic personal information.

Students at the beginning level can usually recognize the alphabet, some single digit numbers and can provide personal information (such as name, date of birth, etc.) in writing and orally. Even if the student is unable to speak more than a few words and phrases or understand spoken English readily, he or she can begin at the beginning level as long as he or she possesses some basic literacy skills.

Intermediate level students possess all of the skills of lower level students. In addition, they should be able to respond to oral questions regarding basic personal information with little hesitation. They will usually show an awareness of time and money, and will be competent at the four basic mathematics operations. Whereas lower level students provide only a bare minimum of information when responding (one or two words), an intermediate level student provides more elaborate answers with some awareness of grammar and sentence structure.

Advanced students are generally capable of completing most basic ESL placement tests with few or no errors. They should respond to oral and written questions with ease. Responses should be complete and similar to those that one would expect from a native speaker. In addition to an increased knowledge of English grammar and sentence structure, advanced students frequently demonstrate a basic understanding of some American slang and idioms.

SAMPLE RESPONSES

The following sample responses have been taken from questions found on the placement test on pages 20, 21 and 22. Keep in mind that these responses are only used as examples of what the tutor can expect when trying to determine student level. Actual test responses may vary greatly.

ORAL QUESTION - What is your name?

Pre-literate: No response or possibly one-word answer "Phan." Probably no response.
Beginning: "My name Phan." Probably some response, possibly no response.
Intermediate: "My name is Phan." Answer should be complete and correct.
Advanced: "My name is Phan." Answer will be complete and correct.

ORAL QUESTION - What was your job in your country?

Pre-literate: No response, possibly one-word answer "sew." Probably no response.
Beginning: "make clothes." Short, non-grammatical response. Possibly no response.
Intermediate: "I worked factory, sew clothes." More elaborate response, some errors.
Advanced: "I worked in a clothing factory for 3 years. Grammatically correct response.

ORAL QUESTION - What time is it? (3:45)

Pre-literate: No response. Probably no response or inappropriate number.
Beginning: "Three (forty five)." Possibly correct answer, less mastery of numbers.
Intermediate: It is three forty five. Answer should be correct.
Advanced: It's a quarter to four. Answer correct, use of idiom "a quarter to..."

READING QUESTION - p...f...e...z (alphabet)

Pre-Literate: No response or inappropriate letters. Probably no response.
Beginning: "p...f...a...c." Possibly correct or incorrect responses, hesitation.
Intermediate: "p...f...e...z." Answer should be correct. No hesitation.
Advanced: "p...f...e...z" Answer will be correct.

Determining Student Level

READING QUESTION - 6...12...14...40 (numbers)

Pre-literate: No response or inappropriate numbers. Probably no response.

Beginning: "6...12...14...14." Probably correct response, possibly an error or two.

Intermediate: "6...12...14...40." Answer should be correct.

Advanced: "6...12...14...40." Answer will be correct.

WRITING QUESTION - What is your first name?

Pre-literate: No response or crudely written name. Probably no response.

Beginning: "Phan." Possibly correct response, possibly first and last name confused.

Intermediate: "My name is Phan." Response should be correct

Advanced: "My first name is Phan." Response will be correct.

MATH SKILLS QUESTION - $16 - 7 =$

Pre-literate: No response, possibly correct. Low awareness of sign (-) meaning.

Beginning: "9." Probably correct response. Should be familiar with sign (-).

Intermediate: "9." Response should be correct.

Advanced: "9." Response will be correct.

VI. ESL CURRICULUM

After placement testing, determining the correct level of instruction and establishing realistic goals, the tutor must decide on the most appropriate ESL curriculum approach for the student. Although there are several curricula alternatives, each approach shares a common emphasis on reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Each curriculum emphasizes different competency areas, such as basic literacy skills, survival skills and employment skills. There are virtues and limitations to each approach; the key is for the tutor to select a curriculum approach that meshes with student needs, goals and level.

1) PRE-LITERATE ESL

Pre-literate ESL is appropriate for students who lack the ability to read and write the English language. Students will learn our alpha-numeric system, as well as some basic consumer, pronunciation and phonics skills. The goals of a typical Pre-literate ESL curriculum include the following competencies:

ESL Curriculum

PRE-LITERATE ESL COMPETENCIES

Left/Right - Top/Bottom Progression
Distinguishing shapes and forms
Use of money
Basic math skills
Filling out basic forms

Formation of letters and numbers
Numbers 1 - 100
Telling time
The calendar (days, date, etc.)
Understanding labels and signs

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to recognize the English alphabet and produce and distinguish consonant and vowel sounds and a limited number of **sight words** (words and numbers that stand for concepts that are not broken down or decoded into sounds) found in forms, labels, signs, etc. Also, students will demonstrate the ability to perform simple addition and subtraction operations in the contexts of telling time and handling money. Students completing Pre-literate ESL will also show an increasing knowledge of English word order and sentence structure.

2) SURVIVAL ENGLISH

Survival English can be taught to students at any level of ESL instruction. Survival English courses deal with social skills that the student will need to master in order to function in our society. The content of a Survival ESL course is communication-oriented, and grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure are always taught in context. A typical survival skills course would include any number of the following competencies:

SURVIVAL SKILLS COMPETENCIES

Providing Personal Information
Obtaining Appropriate Housing
Using the Telephone
Banking and Handling Money
How to Find a Job
American Holidays and Traditions
Understanding Maps and Schedules

Filling out Forms
Shopping for Food, Clothing, etc.
Health Care and Nutrition
Using Community Resources
Using Public Transportation
Registering Children for School
Asking for and Giving Directions

The list of possible survival skills competencies is virtually endless. Just about any aspect of our daily routines can be used as the basis of a survival skills competency. Although competencies are communication-oriented, they are based on the ability to read, write, speak and understand everyday English. It is also important to remember that the tutor can and should focus on survival skills competencies that reflect the needs of the student and his or her family.

Upon completion, a student will be able to ask and answer questions related to daily living needs, though (especially at lower levels) he or she may be unable to deal with complex, unfamiliar situations. The student will show an increasing awareness of community resources (such as the library, bank, post office, schools, bus and train stations) and how to access them. In addition, the student will be capable of filling out and understanding essential forms, such as employment applications, registration forms, checks and other bank slips.

3) *GENERAL ESL* (General Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening Skills)

General ESL courses help the student to develop specific aspects of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. There is little or no emphasis on competencies such as survival skills, employment skills and life skills. Improvement of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills is expected. In many ways, a traditional ESL course resembles the foreign language instruction we receive in high school and college. Much of the emphasis is placed on grammar, sentence structure and vocabulary acquisition. General ESL can be taught at any level above the pre-literate level, but it is especially appropriate for students who wish to attend high school or college (or those already

ESL Curriculum

enrolled in school) and those individuals that already possess adequate literacy and survival skills. General ESL courses focus on any combination of skills, including, most commonly, the following:

GENERAL ESL	
Parts of Speech	Verb Forms and Tenses
Basic Punctuation	Sentence Structure
Synonyms, Antonyms and Homonyms	Basic Letter and Report Writing
Speaking in Public	English Idioms

Upon completion of a General ESL course, a student should demonstrate an increased understanding of everyday written and spoken English. Knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure and pronunciation should be improved. Students should be able to write non-technical, everyday English with spelling and grammatical mistakes. Upon completion of this coursework, a student should be capable of beginning study for a GED diploma, obtaining a driver's license and taking citizenship examinations.

4) PRE-VOCATIONAL ESL

Pre-vocational ESL provides unemployed students with the necessary language skills and cultural orientation for obtaining and maintaining a job. Students are introduced to the American job market and will learn about the employment process, from inquiring about and locating job possibilities to applying and interviewing for positions. Emphasis is placed on functional reading, writing, listening and speaking competencies required for basic employment. Pre-vocational ESL courses include the following competencies:

PRE-VOCATIONAL ESL COMPETENCIES		
Job Titles	Job Responsibilities	Filling out Applications
Reading Want Ads	Giving Personal Info	Asking Questions
Asking for Assistance	Following Instructions	Reporting Illness
Employee Rights	Basic Labor Laws	Payroll & Income Taxes
Workplace Safety	Asking for a Raise	Pay and Benefits

Upon completion of a Pre-vocational ESL course, a student should be able to demonstrate the basic skills needed to find and keep employment. The student should be capable of locating sources of employment possibilities, inquiring about job openings, interviewing for a position, accepting employment and maintaining employment once secured.

5) OCCUPATIONAL ESL (JOB SPECIFIC ESL)

Occupational ESL provides specific, technical English instruction for students who require job specific language skills in order to acquire or retain a job. Many immigrants and refugees possess technical and professional skills (masons, bookbinders, computer operators, engineers, etc.) that are readily sought after in the labor market. However, these individuals frequently not only lack basic English skills, but also job specific English skills required to obtain gainful employment.

Tutoring is usually conducted one-on-one or in small groups by an individual with some degree of expertise in a specific employment field. Tutoring often focuses on vocabulary and technical language that relate directly to a specific job position at a specific workplace -- for example, a dishwasher in the kitchen of a hotel. As with any ESL student, the tutor first must determine what communication skills the student must acquire in order to become employable or satisfy job standards. Familiarity (or the desire to familiarize oneself) with the specific occupation is necessary.

Upon completion of an Occupational ESL course, a student should demonstrate all the necessary basic and technical communication skills required in a specific occupation.

VII. TEACHING TECHNIQUES & ESL METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The instruction of English as a Second Language, at least in its earliest stages of development, was influenced by the academic teaching of foreign languages such as Latin, Spanish, French and German. Anyone who has taken a foreign language class in high school or college is all too familiar with the methods used. Instruction generally involved the rote memorization of grammatical rules and vocabulary, endless repetition, and an emphasis on reading, writing and direct translation. Learning a foreign language was seen as primarily an academic exercise; there was no active premise that the learner would need to use the language in their daily lives.

More recently, practitioners have come to realize that ESL learners have special needs that set them apart from traditional foreign language learners -- they need to use the language as quickly as possible, and are also presented with barriers that make the language learning process more difficult. More recent approaches and techniques (in the last two decades or so) have addressed these

concerns. Emphasis has now been placed on a learner-centered or participatory approach using educational resources and materials relevant to the student's language learning needs and focusing on survival or life skills needed to communicate in our society on a daily basis.

All ESL and foreign language instruction, whether based on recent or more traditional approaches, draws from a number of common concepts and teaching techniques. Many of these techniques play an integral role in contemporary ESL methodology and the different methodology pieces that make up the heart of this chapter. Before we can focus on ESL methodology, we must therefore concentrate on several basic teaching techniques.

ESTABLISHING MEANING OF NEW VOCABULARY

One of the most difficult tasks for the first-time tutor (and the experienced teacher, as well) involves presenting the student with new vocabulary and establishing meaning. Since the student's English language skills can be limited or non-existent, the tutor often must find a way to communicate meaning other than the traditional methods of definition and translation. There are several techniques (see box below) available to achieve this:¹

SEVEN WAYS TO INTRODUCE NEW VOCABULARY

1. Using Real-life Objects (*Realia*)
2. Using Drawings and Pictures
3. Actions and Miming
4. Examples and Context Clues
5. Synonyms and Antonyms
6. English Definition of Word
7. Native Language Translation

Teaching Techniques & ESL Methodology

The first technique for introducing new vocabulary involves the use of *realia*, **real objects**. This group includes concrete meaning illustrating objects such as parts of the body, furniture, clothing, and the like that are present in the classroom or on one's person. It also allows for ready association of object-related vocabulary terms, such as colors. This group consists primarily of common nouns and pronouns.

The second technique is used with words not readily available (animals, for example) that can be explained by using **drawings** and/or **pictures** of the objects. Such visuals also enable the instructor to relate actions verbs and prepositions that can be taught visually, in relation to the common and proper nouns that basically comprise this group.

The third technique allows the tutor to communicate the meaning primarily of verbs, adjectives and prepositions (yawn, tired, in, etc.) that can be demonstrated through **actions** and **gestures**. This forms the basis of the Total Physical Response technique which is discussed later in the methodology section of this chapter.

The fourth technique permits tutors to explain words through the use of **examples** and **context clues**. For example, if there were a selection of collective nouns (e.g. furniture, medicine, fruit), the tutor may choose to provide some context clues to establish meaning: "I like to eat fruit. Fruit is food. Sometimes fruit is green, sometimes it's yellow or orange or red. I eat a lot of fruit. I eat bananas, oranges and apples. Bananas, oranges and apples are fruit." After the meaning has been established, then the tutor can ask the student for more examples.

The fifth technique is used for those words (especially adjectives and verbs) that can be explained quite simply through **synonyms** and **antonyms**. This technique is especially effective with students who already possess a fair amount of vocabulary. It is less effective with complete beginners and pre-literate students. For instance, the tutor can show the meaning of an adjective such as "spacious" by providing synonyms ("big," "large," "roomy," etc.) and antonyms ("small," "little," etc.). Synonyms and antonyms are best used in context with the new word that is being introduced. For example, if I were talking about a "spacious" house, I could say: "Pavel lives in a house. His house is "large." His house is "large," it is very "spacious." "Spacious" and "large" mean the same thing." Gestures may also help to get the point across.

English language definitions and native language translations provide no information on how the word is used in context; although useful, they are not recommended as primary sources of meaning for low level students. Also, by avoiding direct definition and translation of new vocabulary, the tutor asks the student to discover the meaning of the word by paying attention and by using listening comprehension skills and other senses (sight, for example). In all, seven techniques have been mentioned here that the tutor may use to introduce and explain new vocabulary. The tutor also may use any combination of these techniques to explain vocabulary. For instance, a drawing in combination with a gesture or action will allow the student to comprehend more readily.

ESTABLISHING MEANING OF STRUCTURES & GRAMMAR

Another common stumbling block for the inexperienced tutor involves teaching basic grammar and sentence structure to low level

students. When presenting a structure, it is important to establish both the meaning and the form of the structure. Form can be shown quite clearly through repetition, whether it be done orally or in writing. There are several ways in which to establish meaning of sentence structure and grammar:²

TECHNIQUES FOR ESTABLISHING MEANING

1. Visually
2. Situationally (in Context)
3. Contrast

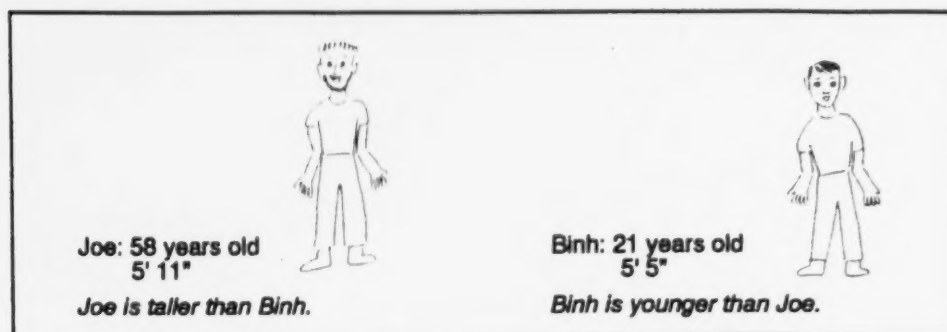
However the tutor chooses to establish the meaning of new grammar or structures, he or she must first isolate the structure so that the student can identify it. This can be done orally by placing added emphasis on the structure or in written fashion (*italics*, **boldface**, CAPITAL LETTERS, [boxes], etc.) as follows:

QUESTION FORMATION - SIMPLE PRESENT

- Do you live* in Philadelphia?
Do they study English?
Do we have homework?
Does she eat candy?
Does he work here?
Does it rain in the winter?

As with new vocabulary, one of the easiest and clearest ways to present new sentence structures and grammar is visually. The tutor may use objects found within the classroom, drawings, pictures and whatever else is needed to establish meaning. To establish meaning for question formation, the tutor might address the student directly: "Do you study English on Saturdays?" The tutor might then elicit questions from the student. To establish meaning of the comparative

form of the adjective, the tutor may choose to draw a picture of two people (or even use the tutor and the student) to demonstrate the *comparison*:



By presenting visual clues, the meaning of the sentence structure becomes readily apparent to the student. The tutor may choose to provide other clues (such as age and height in this example) to facilitate the meaning of the structure.

A second technique allows the tutor to present new grammar and sentence structure by eliciting from daily lives and making use of examples in context. For example, the tutor could establish the meaning of the structure "have to" using the following situation:

Teacher:	You're sick. You need to go to the doctor. You have to go to doctor. What else do you have to do today?
Student::	I have to go to work tonight.
Teacher:	Good. Do you have to work overtime?
Student:	No, I don't.

The tutor may choose to raise his or her voice slightly to emphasize the sentence structure and grammar that he or she wishes the student to focus on. By emphasizing the words "need to" and "have to," the tutor can provide the student with some clues.

Teaching Techniques and ESL Methodology

Another useful technique for establishing meaning of grammar and sentence structure involves the use of contrasting examples. For instance, the tutor could choose to explain countable and non-countable nouns and the meaning of (and differences between) "how much" and "how many" by utilizing or creating a picture of several countable and non-countable nouns such as the following foods:

HOW MUCH? (pictures)	HOW MANY? (pictures)
sugar	eggs
coffee	oranges
milk	potatoes
butter	apples
salt	carrots

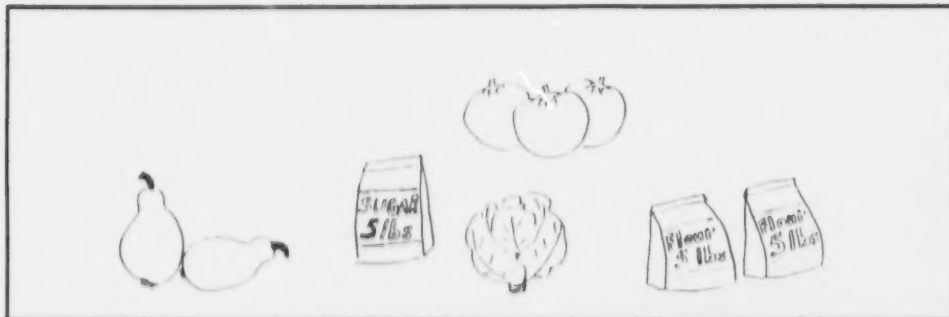
The visual contrast of countable nouns (foods with a plural form) and non-countable nouns (those foods that come in bulk and cannot be counted) provide the tutor and student with concrete examples of the structure being taught. The structures (countable and non-countable nouns, "how much" and "how many") are not mutually exclusive; learning one form can reinforce the other. It therefore makes good sense to present both forms simultaneously. In addition, by using the contrasting example in context, the new structure becomes more meaningful for the student. The tutor may easily reinforce this technique with realia or pictures.

Establishing meaning visually, in context or through contrast, is far superior to providing the student with a trite grammatical rule (which tends to emphasize only form; remember "i before e, except after c, or when sounded like a, as in neighbor and weigh") which does not provide the student with any information as to the meaning of the structure or the context in which it is used.

REINFORCEMENT OF MEANING AND FORM

There are three simple techniques that are frequently used to reinforce the meaning and form of new structures and grammar after the grammar has been reintroduced: questioning, repetition and drilling.³ Although form is important, the tutor should place greater emphasis on comprehension with low level illiterate and literate students.

Simple questions enable the tutor to determine if the student understands the form and meaning of a given structure. Look at the following picture:



In order to check comprehension of the forms "there is" and "there are" in their singular and plural applications to countable and non-countable nouns, the tutor can ask the following questions verbally and/or in writing:

How many tomatoes are there?

How much sugar is there?

How much lettuce is there?

How many pears are there?

How much flour is there?

Teaching Techniques and ESL Methodology

If the student manages to answer correctly, the tutor can assume that he or she has mastered the form and the meaning of the structure. If the student hesitates or cannot answer properly, the tutor may use the picture to establish the meaning of the structure (as we discussed previously).

Simple repetition, whether it be oral or written (or dictation, which is a combination of both), is another technique which enables the student to practice the form of structures and grammar being taught. Oral repetition involves the use of listening comprehension and speaking skills; it also gives the student an opportunity to improve pronunciation. In general, simple repetition involves two steps: an initial utterance (the tutor models the correct form) and repetition by the student.⁴ For example:

Teacher: I live in Philadelphia. Repeat.

Student: I live in Philadelphia.

Prior to using repetition as a classroom technique, the tutor may need to establish some simple one or two word commands such as "listen," "repeat," "again," etc. to facilitate the exchange.

There are several forms of repetition, from individual repetition when working one-on-one, to choral repetition when working in a group, to duet-reading where the tutor reads and the student follows by immediately reading (and repeating) what the tutor has just read. (Duet-reading also focuses on reading comprehension and pronunciation skills).

Repetition is, in reality, the most basic form of our third technique for reinforcing form and meaning of new grammar and

structures: drilling. The principles of drilling are based on behaviorist learning theory and habit formation. Generally speaking, a drill is comprised of three steps:⁵

1. *Stimulus (cue)*
2. *Correct Response*
3. *Reward*

As in simple repetition, the teacher or tutor provides an initial cue for the student. The student in turn must provide a correct response. Appropriate responses will depend on how the drill has been set up. After a response has been received, the tutor will either "reward" the student (praise) or "punish" the student (advise that the answer is incorrect and repeat drill).

The basic idea is that the student will develop a habit (correct response, knowledge of form) that grows stronger and stronger with each successive repetition. For example, a tutor could drill a student on some common expressions as follows (vocabulary should be explained prior to beginning the drill):

Teacher: I feel ill. Where should I go? Student: To the doctor's office. Teacher: Good!
Teacher: I feel hungry. Where should I go? Student: To the restaurant. Teacher: That's right!
Teacher: I feel tired. Where should I go? Student: To bed. Teacher: Well done.

Drills are very effective tools for reinforcing form and meaning of sentence structure and grammar in context. In addition, they provide the student with opportunity to improve listening comprehension and speaking skills. There are a wide variety of drills available to the tutor; several excellent examples can be found in the section on Pattern Drills on pages 72-81.

ESL METHODOLOGY RESOURCE SECTION

The remainder of this chapter highlights several methods that are appropriate for use with pre-literate or low level students (as well as more advanced students). The methodology selected can be utilized in any of the ESL curricula discussed in the previous chapter; they permit the tutor to emphasize literacy and survival skills as well as provide for the use of materials and instruction relevant to the student's needs. As a whole, they allow the tutor to focus on a balance of the four basic skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening comprehension (see Table 7.1).

Each section of this chapter has been written by an experienced ESL instructor incorporating material and examples from his or her classroom experience. This methodology section, in conjunction with classroom observation and other aids used within the Tutor Training Program will permit reinforcement and exploration of these techniques so that first time tutors can use them comfortably with their students.

METHOD	READING	WRITING	SPEAKING	LISTENING
Pre-Reading & Writing	X	X	X	X
TPR			X	X
Pattern Drills			X	X
Cloze Exercises	X	X		
Role Playing			X	X
Basic Math Skills	X	X	X	X
LEA	X	X	X	X

Table 7.1 **ESL METHODOLOGY AND SKILLS MATRIX**

Notes

1. Doff, Adrian, *Teach English: A training course for teachers*, pp. 12-19.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 32-35.
3. Hubbard, Peter et. alia., *A Training Course for TEFL*, pp. 14-16.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

PRE-READING AND PRE-WRITING SKILLS

INTRODUCTION

I remember quite vividly an encounter with a novice tutor a couple of years back. She had made an appointment with our Volunteer Coordinator to discuss a possible student match. After reviewing the student's personal information, including English language skills, she inquired dubiously: "How am I going to tutor this lady, she doesn't speak or understand anything at all, she's completely illiterate. I wouldn't know where to begin."

This concern is only too typical. Frequently, beginning level ESL students lack basic literacy skills -- they won't know how to read and write the English language. It is also possible that they may not be able to read or write their native language.

Students who are literate in their native language and who are familiar with our Roman alphabet may not require pre-reading and pre-writing training. Although they may need to familiarize themselves with the alphabet and corresponding sounds, and to learn

possible letter/sound/word combinations, they usually possess the basic skills required to begin learning English at a level above pre-literate.

The tutor should keep in mind that a student with a low level of literacy in the native language (a third or fourth grade level, for example) will generally have great difficulty in attaining a comparable, much less superior, level of literacy in the second language. One occasional exception to this general rule are the Amerasian children of American servicemen and Vietnamese women who began immigrating to the United States during the 1980s. These young men and women were, for the most part, denied a formal education in their country; many are illiterate or barely literate in Vietnamese. For the most part (especially due to their almost non-existent literacy skills in the native language), these students will sometimes develop second language literacy skills superior to their native language skills.

Several basic principles are important to consider when working with students at the pre-literate level. First, keep in mind that oral language can serve as a springboard to reading and writing activities. Literacy activities often become easier and more successful if first dealt with verbally.¹ Secondly, there is no automatic entry point for learning how to read and write. The tutor does not necessarily have to begin with simple phonics or simple two and three letter words such as "dog" and "cat." In fact, adults generally benefit from beginning with material that is relevant to their lives (for example, sight words taken from applications or words on signs from a store), in areas that are meaningful and will improve motivation and opportunities for success. In addition, although there has been some debate as to the

Pre-Reading and Pre-Writing Skills

best way to approach the instruction of literacy skills -- Should reading or writing come first? -- there is no "right" way to begin. Proceed in a manner with which both you and the student are comfortable.

Finally, it is probably preferable to begin pre-reading and pre-writing exercises using manuscript printing since it is usually much more common in the real world. Both upper and lower-case letters should be used, although there should be more emphasis on small letters, which are also more common in printed material and real life.

Two levels of skills are necessary in order to improve literacy abilities: **decoding and comprehension skills.**² The ability to decode includes skills that enable the student to decipher printed symbols within words and read them as words. Comprehension skills are those that help the student draw meaning from a written or printed text. Both decoding and comprehension involve enabling the student to understand symbols as meaningful thought.

Decoding skills include the ability to discriminate between shapes, symbols and objects, and a basic knowledge of left/right and top/bottom progression. Also included are basic phonics and pronunciation skills such as the capacity to reproduce and recognize sounds corresponding to letters and combinations of letters, recognition of possible letters and sight words that can be easily recognized due to shape and/or format.³

Comprehension skills are built upon decoding skills. These skills include the ability to skim (reading quickly to get the general idea) and scan (locating a specific piece of information) a printed text.⁴

Another related form of comprehension is sight words, where the student learns to recognize words as whole entities without necessarily being able to decode them. Sight word exercises are especially valuable with words of common survival, such as "STOP" or street names that the student sees everyday.

Higher elements of comprehension skills include the development of language skills, vocabulary acquisition, word order, sentence structure, grammar, etc.

Pre-reading and pre-writing exercises are concerned with assisting the student to master decoding skills while developing some basic, fundamental comprehension skills.

With pre-reading and pre-writing skills exercises, it is important to progress as rapidly as the student's motivation and ability permit. If the tutor does not move quickly enough, the student may become bored and discouraged in short order. Also, as with all techniques presented in this manual, pre-reading and pre-writing skills should be taught in context to maximize impact. It is not enough to teach literacy skills for literacy skills' sake. The tutor should emphasize literacy skills that are relevant to the student's needs and goals.

PRE-READING SKILLS

Initial pre-reading instruction should begin by developing the learner's ability to discriminate between shapes such as circles, squares, rectangles and polygons. At this point, it is also possible to introduce exercises that ask the student to identify one shape or character which is different (or the same) within a group or row of characters.⁵

Pre-Reading and Pre-Writing Skills

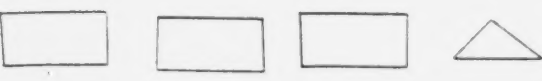
It is important even at this, the most basic of basic levels, to reinforce left to right and top to bottom progression when reading and writing. In addition, since the learner will almost definitely lack the ability to read and write the language, an effective pre-reading or pre-writing exercise will include at least one example that the student can follow with a minimum of direction from the tutor. The following is an example of a very simple exercise:

Example 1:

WHICH SHAPE IS DIFFERENT?

Mark (X) the shape that is different.

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

After mastering shape discrimination, the student should then progress to discrimination of letter and sight word shapes and the ability to discriminate between left/right facing letters and characters and their mirror images (Examples 2, 3, 4 and 5). It is important to make these exercises more and more challenging as the student progresses. This can be accomplished by decreasing the size of the characters and making the differences less and less obvious as the student improves.

Example 2:

Circle the letter that is the same.

- | | | | | |
|------|---|---|----------|---|
| 1. b | d | p | b | f |
| 2. k | t | x | h | k |
| 3. t | t | f | h | k |
| 4. o | o | c | a | u |

There are several variations of the preceding exercise which serve to reinforce basic reading comprehension skills. One possible variation involves providing an upper case (or lower case) letter and asking the student to identify the corresponding lower case (or upper case) letter (Example 3).

Example 3:

Match the capital letters and small letters.

P	r
R	m
G	a
M	g
A	p

Other variations combine listening comprehension with reading skills. The teacher or tutor can provide the student with an oral prompt (letter) and the student must locate and circle the appropriate letter on a worksheet that has been provided. With more literate students the tutor may use entire words as clues. This exercise can also be used to provide the student with an effective method of learning to read and identify basic numbers.

Pre-Reading and Pre-Writing Skills

Example 4:

Circle the word that is the same.

- | | | | | |
|----------|--------|-------|---------|--------|
| 1. man | name | man | mom | now |
| 2. date | take | bake | date | dare |
| 3. book | broke | both | took | book |
| 4. table | tablet | table | trouble | taddle |

The following exercise format asks the student to locate and identify sight words, words or phrases that the student should learn as whole entities without needing to decode them into sounds. A sight word brings the concept to the viewer's mind without reading letter by letter. Examples can be found in many of the signs and printed material that we encounter on a daily basis – EXIT, STOP!, HOSPITAL, etc. The following exercise focuses on identifying the form (Part 1) of sight words and decoding the meaning of symbols (Part 2).

Exercise 5:

Part 1:

Identify the shape of the following words.

1. boy
2. hello
3. age
4. last



Exercise 5:

Part 2:

Match the word to the correct picture.

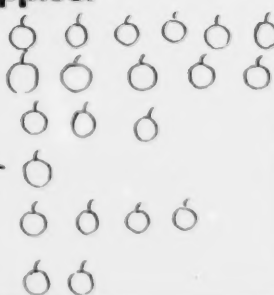
1.		No Smoking
2.		Men
3.		Women
4.		Poison

Note: A line connects the 'No Smoking' text to the cigarette picture, and another line connects the 'Women' text to the woman picture.

Two final pre-reading drills enable the tutor to assist the learner in relating written symbols to concepts; the first exercise concentrates on numbers (Example 6), and the second exercise focuses on initial consonant sounds and corresponding sight words and vocabulary (Example 7). Both exercises can also be done orally, as well as in written form.

Example 6:

Find the correct number of apples.

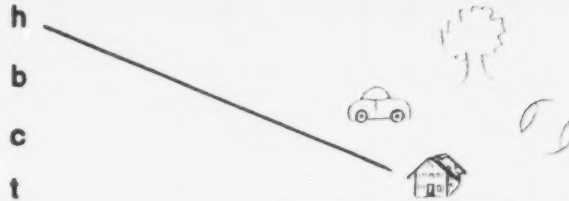
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

Note: A line connects the number '1' to the first row of apples.

Pre-Reading and Pre-Writing Skills

Example 7:

Match the letter to the correct picture.

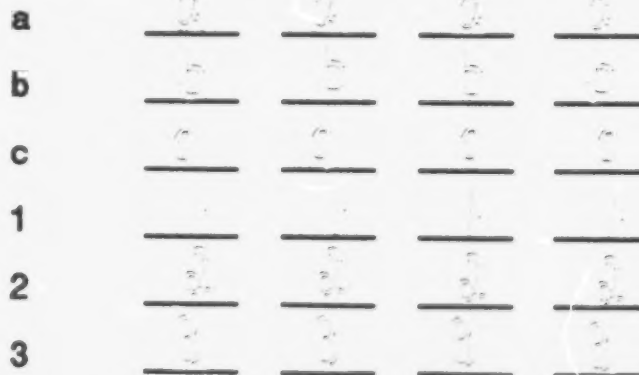


PRE-WRITING SKILLS

Assuming that the student possesses the basic hand-eye coordination to manipulate a pen or pencil, one should design initial pre-writing instruction to provide the student with the skills necessary to produce basic words, phrases and numbers. As mentioned previously, it is preferable to begin writing instruction with manuscript printing.⁶

The first series of pre-writing exercises focuses on producing the letters of the alphabet and single digit numbers. Students who are not familiar with our Roman alphabet may need to begin with simple tracing exercises.

Exercise 8:



As with pre-reading skills, the tutor should make every effort to reinforce progression from left to right, top to bottom. After the student has demonstrated the ability to trace letters and numbers, the tutor may provide worksheets that ask the students to copy letters, numbers, and eventually everyday sight words and vocabulary.

Example 9:

Part 1: Copy the following letters.

d	<u>d</u>	<u>d</u>	<u>d</u>
D	_____	_____	_____
b	_____	_____	_____
B	_____	_____	_____

Part 2: Copy the following words.

man	<u>man</u>	<u>man</u>	<u>man</u>
name	_____	_____	_____
many	_____	_____	_____

Though ostensibly "too" simple, copying is an invaluable exercise among pre-literate students. First of all, it familiarizes students with words they have only known in spoken form, if at all. Secondly, copying reveals to the instructor problems in letter formation (where to start the letter) and proportion, as well as spacing between letters and words. Teachers and tutors should make sure to

Pre-Reading and Pre-Writing Skills

watch students' hands while the latter are inscribing the letters being copied. Many problems in writing can be caught and corrected at this early point. As a yardstick of writing ability, try asking your students to write their addresses. Many students can respond orally, but make a mess of such information when communicating it in written form.

Many additional, slightly more complicated, pre-writing exercises are based on the same principles and techniques mentioned with pre-reading skills. Dictation exercises are a case in point. The teacher or tutor provides the student with an oral prompt -- a letter, number or sight word. The student is expected to write the prompt after hearing it. This type of exercise also provides the students and tutor with the opportunity to practice and improve listening comprehension skills. It can be especially effective in helping the student to differentiate between slight pronunciation variations ("14/40," Example 10), as well as troublesome vowel and consonant sounds.

Exercise 10:

Listen to your teacher and write the numbers.

Oral Prompt:

Student writes:

4

4

14

14

40

40

43

43

4:00

4:00

Example 11:

Listen to your teacher and write the words.

Oral prompt

Student Writes:

put

put

pot

pot

pat

pat

bat

bat

but

but

A final pre-writing drill, based on cloze exercise principles, combines basic reading and writing skills. The student is given an exercise listing some sight words and basic vocabulary. The exercise then asks the student to fill in the blanks with the missing letters. In order to complete the exercise properly, the student must first read, then write the word (or missing letters). At a more advanced level, instructors may give out the same sheet without complete spellings of the words on the left side. Instructors speak the word whose spelling the students must then complete. For more information on cloze exercises, see pages 82-90 in this chapter.

Example 12:

Look at the words and fill in the blanks.

Sunday

S u n d a y

Monday

 o d a

Tuesday

T u d a

CONCLUSION

There are a myriad of exercises that are appropriate for students with little or no literacy skills. Pragmatically, it is essential for the tutor to select and design exercises that can be demonstrated with a minimum of explanation. Psychologically, it is imperative that instructors neither overlook this breadth of teaching at the pre-literate level nor underestimate the gravity of its need. Literacy skills, however tedious they may be to implement, are vital to a student's growth in both his or her new language and culture. At LCFS we see too many students who, after even a decade in this country, remain trapped in entry level jobs simple because they have never learned to read or write words they can speak. With effective implementation of pre-reading and pre-writing strategies, instructors can help students avoid this trap of language.

Notes

1. Bell, Jill and Burnaby, Barbara, *A Handbook for ESL Literacy*, p. 23.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-32.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.
5. Kuy, Kathy and Thomas Bob, *Handbook for Volunteer ESL Literacy Teachers*, p. 6.
6. Bell and Burnaby, *op.cit.*, pp. 25-26.

TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE

by Alison Roberts

INTRODUCTION

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a technique where students physically carry out commands and instructions. Because students are to respond initially with physical rather than verbal or written responses, the primary emphasis is on listening comprehension. Total Physical Response exercises are ideal for low-level students who need to begin at the most simple of levels, free from pronunciation and grammar concerns. Responding with physical actions reinforces what is being taught. Once the student understands simple instructions, this technique can be used to teach real-life skills such as following directions to find an address or using a public telephone.

Total Physical Response exercises can bring relief at classroom intervals when students get weighed down with the complexities of the English language. This method can be as simple as "Doing the Hokey Pokey" or as complex as following directions to trace a route on a map or drawing shapes to form a picture. Speaking and listening skills are practiced as oral directions are given and followed.

Total Physical Response

This approach has kept my students from nodding off to sleep in many a long class. It has also been effective in strengthening listening comprehension skills.

EXAMPLES

Learning Classroom Words

Total Physical Response exercises are ideal for introducing a student to his or her learning environment. Wherever you are tutoring your student, there will be objects on hand that you will use in class; therefore, the student needs to be familiar with them in English. Such items may include books, pens or pencils, eraser, table, etc. Consider what nouns you want to teach and what accompanying verbs will be.

Begin by demonstrating a few simple actions. For example, in your first lesson, open a book and say, "Open your book." Then close the book and say, "Close your book." Point to the student's pen and say "Point to my pen."

When your student has learned to respond to these commands, you may write them on a blackboard or piece of paper to attach written words to what your student already understands.

Introduce new words slowly, a few at a time. At the start of each lesson, go over what you learned previously. In your next lesson, you might choose to add "door", "pencil", and "dictionary". But first go over the old commands. Say:

Open your book. Close your book. Point to your pen.

Then demonstrate while saying:

Open the door. Close the door. Point to the door.
Point to your pencil. Open your dictionary. Close
your dictionary. Point to your dictionary.

Be certain that your student understands the basic TPR pattern before you introduce new vocabulary. After several lessons, your directions may be as follows:

Open your book. Read your book. Close your book.
Stand up. Turn right. Walk to the door. Open the door.
Close the door. Walk to your chair. Sit down. Open
your notebook. Write your name. Say your name.

Teaching the Alphabet

There will be many situations when your student will need to spell his or her name. Also there will be occasions when your student will need to understand words being spelled to him. I find the following exercise effective in teaching listening comprehension, pronunciation and alphabetical order.

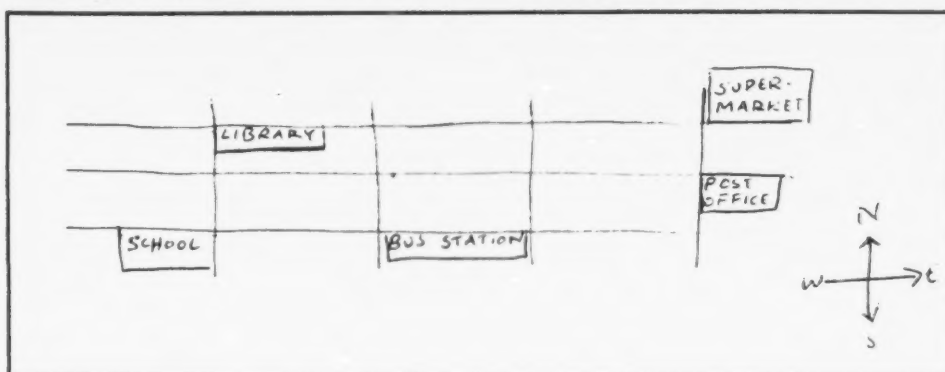
I use a pack of index cards with the alphabet written on them. I write the capital letters of the alphabet on one side of the cards and the corresponding lower-case letters on the other. I have the students spread the cards out in front of them either with all the capital or all the lower-case letters face up. I call out the letters and the students pick them up. With more than one student, this becomes a game, students competing for the most letters. When the game is over, I have the students line up the letters to reinforce their knowledge of alphabetical order.

When the students are familiar with the alphabet, I ask one of them to call out the individual letters while the others pick them up. This gives pronunciation practice for the student calling out letters and practice understanding a different voice and accent for the other students.

Total Physical Response

Teaching Map Use

The Total Physical Response technique is a great way to teach basic use of simple street maps. The student looks at a map while the tutor or another student tells how to get from one place to another. The student must follow the route with his finger, ending up at the correct spot. For example, the student may be told how to get from the school to a supermarket by walking north two blocks, turning right, and walking east three blocks. Of course, real street maps are rarely so simple, so it is best to begin with a simple grid-like map with a few buildings labeled on it. You will have to draw the map.



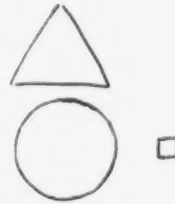
Be sure to switch roles and allow the student to give instructions when comprehension is complete.

For the more advanced student, a real city map can be used. I give my students maps of Philadelphia and explain the table of contents. I explain how to use the letter and number grid to locate areas on the map. I then give names of important or historical places and have my students find them and put their fingers on them. They really enjoy the challenge of finding specified places and often end up visiting some of the places they have found.

Teaching Shapes and Relationships with Drawing

Another exercise consists of giving the student instructions to draw pictures. The tutor draws a series of designs on cards. The designs can form images, or simply be lines and shapes in space. Any new vocabulary should be explained, e.g. line, circle, triangle, big, small, under, over, to the right of, etc. The tutor gives the student a blank piece of paper and, without showing the original picture, instructs the student how to copy the original. The tutor and student then compare pictures, discuss problems, and reverse roles with a different picture to reproduce.

Here is a sample drawing:



The instructions would be:

- 1) Draw a big triangle; 2) Draw a big circle under the triangle; and
- 3) Draw a small square to the right of the circle.

The picture might be a scene with vocabulary words from previous lessons:



Then the instructions would be:

- 1) Draw a house; 2) Draw a fat man and a thin woman to the left of the house; and 3) Draw a car to the right of the house.

Total Physical Response

CONCLUSION

When teaching low-level students, Total Physical Response exercises are a great start. They establish the base of comprehension that must exist before the student can initiate spoken or written English communication.

For all levels of English students, I find this approach to be very effective and a lot of fun. My students always enjoy Total Physical Response exercises; map study, in particular, becomes much more accessible. Physical actions reinforce the vocabulary used in the exercises and make remembering easy.

In addition, when students give instructions to each other, they tend to be more aware of pronunciation. When words are not understood, actions do not follow. Students take care to speak clearly.

PATTERN DRILLS

by Jonna Detweiler

INTRODUCTION

What is a pattern drill?

A pattern drill is a spoken repetition of a sentence construction with small changes in each repetition. By speaking, writing or drawing, the teacher (or another student) gives a clue to the change for each repetition. Without seeing the response, the student must think of the pattern with its change and say it.

A simple example of a beginner's pattern drill can be used to reinforce learning of the verb "to like." Since I have students who know very little English, I often begin by using advertisements or pictures of a few well-known foods. Pointing to a picture and pantomiming while talking, I say, "This is ice cream. I eat ice cream. Mmmm - good. I like ice cream." The students don't need to check a dictionary when I pantomime; the meaning is clear and they learn better by figuring things out than by looking them up. I might then

Pattern Drills

point to a few pictures of men and boys and say "He likes ice cream" for each person and to pictures of women and girls and say "She likes ice cream" and so forth. You, the tutor, will be able to see how much your student already knows, and you can judge how quickly you can go in introducing new material.

After writing (or providing a handout of) all the present tense forms of the verb "to like" for the student to "see" the speaking, and after having them repeat the forms aloud, I'm ready to lead into a simple drill for practice. The students see only the subject pronouns (I, you, he, etc.) and perhaps some drawings as clues. Pointing to the first clue "I" and stating it aloud, I pause, point to a picture of a food such as pizza and then give the students the correct response form by saying "I like pizza." They repeat this. I point to the second clue "you" and say it, hesitate, look to the students and motion them to talk. If they don't talk, I say the first two words and point to the picture and they almost always say "pizza" at that point. By the third clue, they usually have caught on, and they can give the whole response. The drill can be repeated with different foods. As another alternative, the tutor may also provide the students with several flashcards or pictures of different foods as well as several flashcards with the forms "I like," "you like," etc.

Example 1

CLUE (Teacher says word and/or points to written word or drawing)

RESPONSE (Student says sentence without seeing it)

I	I like pizza.
you	You like pizza.
he	He likes pizza.
she	She likes pizza.
it	It likes pizza.
we	We like pizza.
they	They like pizza.

When I use this drill with beginning students I often write the pronouns (the clues) in the sequence shown here. I initially follow the sequence while pointing to the words. Then, I no longer point to the words. I change the sequence so that the students must rely on their listening skills, and I begin to speed up the speaking of the clue. These variations create challenges for the students. Sometimes I will have one student say a clue and another student respond. In an additional variation, the student gives me, the teacher, the clue. I must respond and they must listen to see if I make a mistake. Of course, I deliberately make a few mistakes for them to catch. This can be an empowering exercise for some students and they quite enjoy it. However, a few students are very serious about their endeavors and may be impatient with this variant of the exercise. As a tutor, you will need to determine what feels comfortable for both you and the student.

What is the purpose of a pattern drill?

The important thing to remember is that a pattern drill is not used to teach new vocabulary. Unknown vocabulary will distract from the main purpose of the drill, which is to establish a pattern in the student's mind that remains in the memory bank and can be referred back to as needed. Pattern drill example 1 illustrates this point. Perhaps you have noticed while speaking with individuals who come from another country that they often have difficulty in using the third person singular. They might say "He like music," instead of "He likes music." When you are tutoring, you may choose to correct this error by telling the student that he or she has made a mistake and by giving him or her the right answer. However, it is often more effective to begin to review the pertinent drill which has already been done. You

Pattern Drills

say, "Remember? I like pizza. You like pizza. He - - - ." With a flash of discovery, the memory bank is opened up, and the student exclaims: "Ahhh! He likes!" The student is happy because he or she has found the correct answer autonomously, and the next time the same mistake crops up (Learning is slow for everyone!), he or she will be even quicker in discovering the right answer. After a while, and much sooner than if the tutor had simply supplied the correct response, the student will no longer make that mistake at all.

Pattern drills are especially good in practicing correct grammar and sentence structure. They can also be useful in learning and practicing correct intonation. They help the student to develop listening comprehension skills and are a stepping stone to engaging in real conversation. Examples of pattern drills for these skills will be given later.

What are the different types of pattern drills?

Several different types of pattern drills can be identified. I use two main types. One type is the more traditional, teacher-directed drill, and the other is an interactive, student-directed drill. The teacher-directed drill can be very useful in listening comprehension practice and in establishing a sentence structure pattern. It is usually a pattern drill without a situational context and it thus focuses on correct grammatical recitation. The student-directed drill usually depends on written or illustrated clues, requiring two students (or the student and the tutor) to engage in a question-and-answer pattern or a statement-and-response pattern. A tutor with one student needs to abandon the authority role to a certain extent, allowing the student to initiate the drill. This type of drill works well when an imaginary situation is described and the drill fits that context. Examples could possibly

include two friends talking together or a parent and teenage child interacting.

TEACHER-DIRECTED DRILLS

As mentioned, the teacher-directed drill often has the teacher introducing the clue in spoken, written, or drawn form, then waiting for a response. Students might respond together or separately as called upon. Pattern drill Example 1 is a teacher-directed drill. Another kind of teacher-directed drill makes use of hidden clues without a question. Students do not see the clues written; they must listen to the teacher. The teacher assists the students in the first responses then expects them to answer without help. For example, the following is a very simple drill practicing possessive exercises that I do with beginning students.

Example 2 - CLUE (teacher)	RESPONSE (student)
What is his name? (pointing to a man or a picture)	His name is Phan.
What is her name? (pointing to a woman)	Her name is Tanya.
What is _____? (continuing to indicate other people)	

An example of another hidden clue pattern drill for beginning students, this time practicing short answer forms and subject pronouns, would be:

Example 3 - CLUE (teacher)	RESPONSE (student)
Does she have children? (Yes)	Yes, she does.
Does he have children? (Yes)	Yes, he does.
Do they have children? (Yes)	Yes, they do.
Does she have children? (No)	No, she doesn't
Does he have children? (No)	No, he doesn't
Do they have children? (No)	No, they don't

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I often change familiar or existing teacher-directed drills into student-directed drills. Both examples 2 and 3 can be changed to become student-directed drills, as explained in the next section. Then, the students no longer look to the teacher to correct their responses, because they are in pairs; each looks to another student and imagines having a mini-conversation with that person. Both students in the pair-work are given clues for the questions and for the answers.

STUDENT-DIRECTED DRILLS

Student-directed drills (pair-work) comprise a major part of my classroom plans. I believe that they give students the feeling that language is a real tool for communication and not just an academic exercise. Most immigrants feel helpless and frustrated at times in their new and strange situations. As a tutor, you need to be open to relating to your student in the role of a peer when you are using this exercise. Correct only major mistakes (essential to understanding and reflecting the present lesson) and either ignore small mistakes or mention them at the end of the exercise. A student new to English should have a few initial corrections, while a student already familiar with the language can be corrected more strictly. One of your principal goals as a tutor is to help your student to be comfortable in speaking English.

By use of pictures or real people, examples 2 and 3 can be modified into this type of pattern drill. If you have one student, you both see the clues for the questions and answers. It is often preferable to have your student begin with the questions and you answer; then trade places and you ask, the student answers. Usually, I designate the questions for person "A" and the answers for person "B." They go through the drill once then switch roles, repeating the drill. Changed to a student-directed drill, Example 3 would look like this:

Example 3 -

CLUES (drawn)	PERSON "A" (says)	PERSON "B" (says)
1. she (yes)	Does she have children?	Yes, she does.
2. he (yes)	Does he have _____?	Yes, he _____.
3. they (yes)	Do they _____?	_____.
4. she (no)	Does she _____?	No, she doesn't.
5. he (no)	_____?	No, _____.
6. they (no)	_____?	_____.

When I have students who know very little or no English, I use squares of red and blue construction paper to clarify who asks and who answers. (With only one student who knows no English, I temporarily bring in another person(s) who the student knows to illustrate the method; this helper must promise not to explain the lesson in the student's native language). Beginning with the simple questions of "What is your name?", I establish that the square of red paper is in the hands of the person who asks the question, and the blue square is in the hands of the one who answers.

Next we can do drill Example 2 as a student-directed drill, using people in the room or pictures of people named by the student (What is his name?, etc.). Note that in these first English lessons, a drill may be used to teach a small amount of new vocabulary -- an exception to the general rule! Make sure to introduce the new vocabulary words before initiating the pattern drill.

After the student has had additional preparation and has made some progress in English, an exercise like Example 4 provides a good drill to practice prepositions of place (under, on, next to, near, at, etc.). Be sure the student knows the clue words from other lessons before this one.

Pattern Drills

Example 4 -

CLUE (drawn) CLUE (written)	PERSON "A" (says) (red paper)	PERSON "B" (says) (blue paper)
1. book	Where is the <u>book</u> ?	The book is <u>under</u> the table.
2. pencil	Where is the ____?	The pencil is _____.
3. lamp	Where _____?	The _____.
4. TV	_____?	_____.
5. chair	_____?	_____.

The teacher can write the forms for the questions and responses and say the first aloud. To be effective, the drill should have five to ten clues and responses. Remember that the purpose of the drill is not to introduce new vocabulary, but to reinforce concepts.

Another fun, student-directed drill practices the present continuous. Pictures cut from magazines are good (especially a sports magazine), but drawings can also be used.

Example 5 -

CLUE	PERSON "A" (says)	PERSON "B" (says)
1. swim	What is <u>he</u> doing?	He is swimming.
2. jump	What is <u>she</u> doing?	She is jumping.
3. run	What _____?	They _____.
4. play tennis	_____?	_____.
5. watch TV	_____?	_____.

As mentioned before, pattern drills can also be used to learn and practice intonation. English intonation is especially difficult for those students who speak a tonal language, such as the Vietnamese. A possible drill for the intonation of questions and exclamations might be something like the following:

Example 6 -

CLUES: (written) 1. to the store; 2. to the bank; 3. to the hospital; 4. to church;
5. to school; 6. downtown; 7. home.

PERSON "A"	PERSON "B"	PERSON "A"
1. He's going <u>to the store</u> .	Excuse me. He's going <u>to the store</u> ?	Yes, to the store!
2. to the bank.	Excuse me. He's _____?	Yes, _____!
3. to the hospital.	_____?	_____!

This exercise is an excellent opportunity for the teacher to begin by describing a situation where two people are talking, one of them hard-of-hearing (or they are at a noisy party). The drill can be imagined in this context.

Another example of a drill which can be enjoyable to imagine in context (unless it hits too close to home) is the following. This situation can be described as a conversation between husband and wife or between parent and teenager.

Example 7 -

CLUES 1. eat; 2. talk; 3. sleep; 4. drink; 5. watch TV.

STUDENT "A"	STUDENT "B"	STUDENT "A"
1. You eat too much.	No, I don't eat too much.	Yes, you do!
2. You talk _____.	No, I don't _____.	Yes, _____!

Notice that this drill is good practice for the short answer form and for the negative with "do." It can also be changed to practice the simple past ("You ate too much!", "No, I didn't eat too much!"). Whoever is responding would best benefit from the drill if he or she does not look at the first response, but attempts to listen for the next clue (the verb). Sometimes I give separate sheets of paper with different clues (or the clues in a different color) to the students so that they don't know what to expect and must rely on hearing.

Pattern Drills

Can I Use a Pattern Drill?

Perhaps you remember tedious drills from former days of studying a foreign language in school. Hopefully, you now have an idea of how pattern drills can not only be an excellent tool in teaching English, but they can also be fun! Once you become a little practiced in doing drills, you can use material in almost any textbook to develop your own. You should have five to ten clues and responses. Teacher-directed pattern drills can be used to practice many grammatical structures and to improve listening skills. Student-directed drills can provide students with a real sense of competence, and can pave the way to conversation and writing skills. Used in moderation, pattern drills can be an exciting part of your English lessons.

CLOZE EXERCISES

by John Lobron and Harry Ringel

INTRODUCTION

The word 'cloze' has its roots in the word 'closure.' In a cloze reading situation, students are required to complete a passage from which words have been deleted. In essence, they are 'closing' on the learning concept left vacant by the instructor.

Cloze exercises develop a learner's reading comprehension skills. They are good tools for teaching ways of processing written information and can be used to teach a variety of lessons, from choosing the best word to recognizing conceptual relationships between sentences. A cloze procedure is therefore essentially a cognitive task. The reader has to reason and construct suggestions to fill the gap on the basis of evidence derived from the context.

APPROACHES TO READING

Traditional approaches to teaching reading have focused on the importance of phonics. In the phonics approach, sounds are sequenced

Cloze Exercises

in order of difficulty starting with simple consonants and vowels sounds then moving on towards more complex combinations. Vocabulary is limited to those words which have sounds already learned by the students.

However, recent trends by reading educators have focused more on the development of the learner's ability to make semantic (word meaning and use) and syntactic (form) sense and predictions about the text they read. This is an important consideration when working with adult learners who have a tendency to stop and translate each new word they come across in a reading selection. This constant stop-and-go translation of text is not only time-consuming and clumsy, but it turns what should be an enjoyable experience into a grueling task. Rather than instilling in the learner a view of reading as a potentially informative and enjoyable experience, it is sheer drudgery. Exhaustive translation distracts the reader from what the main goal should be in reading -- getting meaning from the text, understanding the content of written words when blended in thought.

One of your goals as a tutor should be to help the learner break this habit and to replace it with an ability to gain meaning independent of rote translation. You should be trying to provide the learner with the tools necessary for him or her to communicate with the written page.

Cloze exercises are meant to help the learner become better acquainted with the structure of English and to increase the reader's ability to improve one's own vocabulary without having to open a dictionary every time a new word pops up.

SOME EXAMPLES

You are probably more familiar with the term 'multiple choice exercise' when describing the type of cloze exercises illustrated below (Example 1). The process of choosing the appropriate word from a group of five possible answers provides the 'closure,' since only one choice makes sense.

The first example illustrates a **context cloze**. Word choice is determined exclusively by the meaning of the sentence.

Example 1:

John drove his _____ to the store.
car box chair dog food

In this type of cloze exercise the reader discovers the way in which familiar words are put together in phrases and complete sentences to understand the message before determining the correct word use.

Example 2 illustrates a **grammar cloze**. In contrast to Example 1, the learning experience here is devised not to elicit inferential understanding of information but of the language pattern through which it is said. Instructors may use a grammar cloze to reinforce lesson in parts of speech (e.g., correct preposition use) or adjustments that must be made as sentence structures change (e.g., subject-verb agreement). The following example presents pronouns, singular and plural, and asks students to plug them into sentences:

Cloze Exercises

Example 2:

Fill in the blanks with the correct pronoun.

Singular

I
You
He, She, It

Plural

We
You
They

1. _____ watch television.
2. _____ walks to the post office.
3. _____ reads a book.
4. Billy and _____ play baseball.
5. _____ love my family.

As can be seen, this grammar cloze requires awareness of several aspects of related language concepts on the part of the reader. First, the student must know the difference between singular and plural pronouns. He or she must also be able to use the spelling of the verb to determine correct person. Sentence 4 involves an understanding of compound subjects, while Sentence 5 draws on knowledge of a related language form (the possessive pronoun 'my') for accurate completion of the cloze.

Learning goals are therefore multiple in a grammar cloze. The student not only becomes aware of the way the pronoun replaces some person, place or thing. He is also learning how to develop a sense of how the pronoun is used in relation to the rest of the text.

A related cloze pattern uses single parts of speech as the learning focus. In example 3, the words used to complete the passage are all verbs:

Example 3:

Name _____ Date _____

English as a Second Language

Living in the City

work wait sit throw get on walk stop cross

Directions: Fill in the blanks with correct words from above.

1. People _____ in an office building.
2. People _____ in the lobby.
3. People _____ the street at the crosswalk.
4. Cars _____ at the intersection.
5. Pedestrians _____ across the street.
6. Women _____ on the bench.
7. People _____ away trash in the trash basket.
8. People _____ the subway in the subway station.

The above cloze exercise was preceded by an oral exercise involving a visual aide, in this case an illustration of a busy city intersection. Through this illustration the verbs and their related actions were introduced. Their meanings should have been clear by the time they appeared in the cloze. At this point the learner, equipped with the meanings, would be more readily able to think about why one verb is more appropriate than another for each particular sentence.

Another type of cloze, the open-end cloze, allows the student to bring his or her own language to the vacant portions of the passage. This cloze pattern works more effectively with students who already have some knowledge of sentence structure; in freeing learners from the yoke of a grammar pattern, it simultaneously burdens them with the necessity of creating patterns of their own:

Cloze Exercises

Example 4:

Coming to the USA

My name is _____. I was born in _____ (location). I left _____ (country) because _____ (reason). I left in _____ (year) and went to _____ (destination). When I left my home I felt _____. (emotion) I arrived in the United States in _____. (date) When I arrived here I _____. (action) Now I _____. (action)

Cloze exercises like the one above are helpful as writing exercises which can then be read by the student with the added interest of personal expression. The teacher or tutor might want to begin by sharing a model story with the learner, perhaps one which a previous student has created out of the same cloze pattern. Once the student has absorbed the demands of sentence structure, vocabulary, and content, the instructor may then proceed to elicit the student's own contributions. Every adult has a wealth of experience from which to draw. In this case, the learner is providing autobiographical words and phrases that fit the logic as well as the pattern of the story.

Notice that an open-end cloze may be adjusted in terms of complexity of language demands. In the second sentence, for example, the instructor may wish to drop the 'because' requirement in favor of the more simply put 'in', referring to the year in the next sentence. The instructor may also wish to delete the 'emotion' aspect of the cloze, as well as the 'action' sentences which require verb-initiated completions, and replace them with "now I live in _____" and "I live with _____" single or two-word completions based on simple noun choice.

In any case, instructors using cloze techniques should keep in mind that varying language selection to include brief word pattern and/or longer word groupings is an integral element in constructing the exercise. The instructor must determine what he or she wants the student to learn from the cloze before constructing the exercise itself.

A related concept to open-end cloze is the **sentence completion cloze**. As the name indicates, this exercise is useful in helping students at a more advanced level to recognize combinations of ideas within sentences and to implement such combinations on their own:

Example 5:

Example: I like music because it makes me feel good.

I like music because it relaxes me.

I like music because it _____.

I like music because _____.

I like _____.

In the above exercise we are once again taking advantage of the student's personal experience, in this case with music. Beyond experience, the stress in this exercise is to provide the learner with an opportunity to better understand the reasoning process behind the words they are reading. The learner also gains an understanding of cause-and-effect within a sentence.

Note that the instructor might use the same cloze pattern to develop a student's understanding of giving additional information ('I like music and _____.') or of contrasting ideas ('I like music but _____').

Below is an example of a **vocabulary cloze** that also involves sentence completion. In this cloze exercise, however, note the active

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correlation between two learning activities. The cloze reinforces a lesson that has previously been done, in this case vocabulary words for specific occupations:

Example 6:

Name _____

Date _____

English as a Second Language Class MAIN STREET USA

City neighborhoods have main streets where people can do all their shopping. For example, 5th Street is the MAIN STREET in the neighborhood of Olney.

Directions: Fill in the blanks with one of the occupations listed below.

jeweler	florist	hairdresser	pharmacist	butcher
barber	baker	mechanic	greengrocer	optician

1. When I go shopping for fruit I go to the _____.
2. When I go shopping for bread I go to the _____.
3. When I need to fill a prescription I go to the _____.
4. When I need new eyeglasses I go to the _____.
5. When I need my car repaired I go to the _____.
6. When I need a haircut I go to the _____.
7. When I go shopping for jewelry I go to the _____.
8. When I go shopping for meat I go to the _____.
9. When I want to buy flowers I go to the _____.
10. When I want a new hairstyle I go to the _____.

As stated, this cloze can be given to learners after the instructor has discussed with them the typical shops found in a neighborhood business district and labels for the individuals working in these shops. Instructors can also discuss the types of services offered as an activity preliminary to the cloze.

This kind of cloze develops the reader's ability to gain meaning from context in a manner that is much more narrow than cloze examples previously cited. The cue words ('fruit,' 'bread,' etc.) are clearly provided; answers merely have to be checked against the context. The pupil is not being encouraged to develop the ability to

search for important context clues which may lie outside the immediate sentence. This type of cloze exercise is meant to focus the student's attention on a particular group of words or phrases, in this case those related to different occupations.

The next cloze is also built around vocabulary, though with more of a 'cultural orientation' flavor than was involved in Example 6. Limited English speakers coming from climates where four seasons do not exist are starved for ways to articulate the changes they see happening around them. As a preview activity, the instructor may read aloud to students a short passage about 'Spring' or list responses to the question in the title below at the beginning of a lesson that will culminate in the cloze:

Example 7:

What do people do in the springtime?

Fill in the blanks with one of these words:

flowers	park	birds	baseball
children	music	bike	Coca Cola

I plant _____ in my garden.

I go to the _____ after work.

My boy plays _____ with his friends.

Sarah listens to _____ on the porch.

John drinks _____ to cool off.

_____ sing songs when it gets warm.

_____ play outside in the spring.

My girl rides her _____ on the sidewalk.

Unlike the vocabulary for Example 6, the words chosen for this cloze may be more random. They may grow out of student responses and/or cultural terms that the instructor supplies. Note also that this

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exercise varies the order of the cloze blanks by positioning two at the beginnings of sentences.

CONCLUSION

Cloze exercises comprise only one activity among many that teachers and tutors may want to use to improve a student's reading comprehension skills. It should be kept in mind, however, that the cloze procedure is especially useful in that it trains students to look carefully at all structural clues and to explore a reading passage for related concepts. It can be used to enhance students' understanding of vocabulary and grammar, as well as sentence structure and their own sense of how language operates.

More importantly, cloze exercises provide excellent preparation for developing a student's ability to gain meaning independently from the textbound word. They challenge learners to understand the overall thrust of what the writer is trying to communicate to the reader — a vital emphasis for student of limited English proficiency.

ROLE PLAYING

by Jonna Detweiler

INTRODUCTION

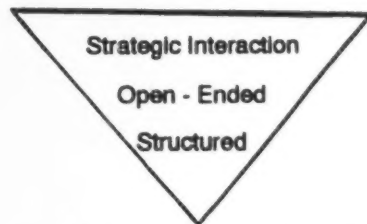
Although role-playing is acting out a situation, no one needs to be an actor to have a successful lesson. Role-playing is interactive, fun and useful practice of real-life experiences. In role playing, a mini-drama is presented; students stand up, walk or sit down as the situation demands, while they also talk through their roles. Mastering a role-playing situation often gives the students confidence for "surviving" in the English-speaking world.

The purpose of role-playing is to build confidence, so don't correct during the role-playing, although you may assist by prompting. Preparation for role-playing can come from student-directed drills. For example, a pattern drill might exercise the question, "What's the problem?" and the responses, "I have a headache," "I have a stomach ache," (and so forth, based on drawings of different medical problems). Then the role-playing can have one or more students acting as patients and another student acting as the

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doctor. In a tutoring situation, you might have the student pretending to be the doctor and you pretending to be a difficult patient. The first thing to do after the role-playing is to compliment the student(s) -- in a classroom situation I have everyone applaud. Often I make quick notes of a few mistakes and the student goes over the mistakes with me, frequently correcting them himself or herself.

I have divided role-playing into three main types: **structured**, **open-ended** and **strategic interaction**. Actually, there are not three distinct types, but a continuum. Graphically, these types can be represented in an inverted triangle:



At the narrow point of the triangle, at the bottom, role-playing is very structured, with limited or no room for variations or surprises. The two or more persons playing the roles have definite things they should be saying in the situation and in reaction to what the others say. For example, home telephones in Italy are answered by saying "Pronto" ("Ready"), but the word "Hello" is generally the American response and "Ready" would not be acceptable.

As the triangle broadens to include open-ended role-playing, we have situations where the accepted responses could be several and we really don't know exactly what the student will say. However, we structure the situation enough to contain an idea of the range of possible responses and endings. At the top of the triangle, where it is the widest, I have placed strategic interaction. Strategic interaction

occurs when a scenario is created with persons who wish to have different endings to the role playing (for example, one person wants the store to close, another wants it to stay open). In this type of role-playing, the teacher doesn't know exactly what the student will say or what the ending will be. I will explain in more detail these three different types of role-playing in the remainder of this article.

STRUCTURED ROLE - PLAYING

Structured role-playing is most realistic when it involves fairly formal situations or situations in public. For example, you may say to your beginning student, "I am your boss. You are with your wife and children. I don't know your wife's name. I don't know your children's names. Introduce them to me." (You may begin with the student playing the role of the "boss" and you the employee, and then switch parts). Students who know very little English will probably need pictures or quick stick drawings to explain the situation. Before doing the role-playing, they will have seen the correct forms in a short reading or a presentation that you gave. They will have already practiced the pronunciation, which should not be a stumbling block. Then, in doing the role-playing, you and the student (or two students) will actually stand and do all the physical movements associated with this type of situation (gesturing towards the "persons" you are introducing, smiling, etc.).

If the role - playing situation is short and uncomplicated, such as introductions, simply talking about it gives enough direction for the students to follow. For students who are able to read, a structured format for the role-playing may be presented in written form, such as the following telephone call for information. Remember that the emphasis should be on communication, not grammar. Any necessary

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grammar and vocabulary, however, should be first presented in a short reading and related exercises for the sake of reinforcement.

CUSTOMER	AMTRAK REPRESENTATIVE
	Answer the telephone.
Say <u>where</u> you want to go and <u>date</u> you want to go. Ask <u>what</u> time the train leaves.	
	Say times. (Look at train schedule).
Choose a time. Make a reservation.	Ask for <u>name</u> and <u>telephone number</u> .
Answer.	Repeat <u>name</u> and <u>reservation information</u> .
Thank the AMTRAK representative and say "goodbye."	

Beginning students who already know some English can do some role-playing "cold" without much preparation, or they might construct the dialogue beforehand with the teacher's assistance. This is a technique that I sometimes use. The teacher introduces the situation, perhaps draws stick figures, then asks the students what might be said, writing down correct responses for the student to see. For example, you might ask your student(s) to give you the dialogue for a telephone call to the doctor's office to make an appointment for a check-up. "What does the doctor's secretary say when she answers the phone?" you ask. The student might reply, "Hello." You do not write this down, but instead you say, "This is a good way to answer the telephone at home, but at an office the response is different. What do

you think the medical secretary might say?" If the student is stuck, of course you give a correct possibility and continue making up a dialogue together, writing it down. After a complete dialogue is invented, the role playing can be done. Put the paper with the dialogue away; no one should read the dialogue, but act out the situation from memory. However, what is said does not have to be exactly what is written, though it should be generally correct in communicating the information. As mentioned before, the teacher can prompt during the role-playing, but should save corrections for later.

To make the above dialogue seem even more real, you might try another teaching exercise: the student acting as a patient looks up a doctor's number in an actual phone book. In role-playing both "patient" and "secretary" might have a calendar in front of them. Sometimes I have children's toy phones that I ask them to use. With or without a phone, I always ask them to actually, physically make the movements of dialing, answering, talking on the phone and hanging up. This is very important because it helps students to remember the correct way to talk on the telephone when they must do this on their own at home. Props are a valid way of making role-playing both more entertaining and more relevant. Besides the telephone books and toy phones, other props that can be used in role playing are train and bus schedules, restaurant menus, movie theater ads, the classified ads for jobs or apartments, and catalogues for clothing. Be sure to keep props simple for beginning students. Perhaps you can cut, paste and photocopy parts of ads you'd like your student to see (times, prices, etc.).

As mentioned above, the situations and roles for role-playing might be introduced in any number of ways -- oral explanations,

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drawings, dialogues planned together, written clues. Pattern drills and cloze exercises, introduced in previous lessons, help the student to be comfortable in correct English communication (appropriate grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure). Of all these methods, I personally prefer not to use the written clues, since they make the acting less realistic. However, in a one-on-one situation, such clues could be used as practice. I have found that students best remember dialogues planned together and then acted out, as well as dialogues acted out and then reconstructed in written form. All structured role-playing is best used in situations which have fairly precise ways of communicating. These include the following situations, some of which have already been mentioned:

1. Introductions - formal and informal;
2. Telephone calls for information - to transportation offices or movie theaters, renting apartments or applying for jobs, etc.; telephone calls for appointments; calls for emergencies, etc.;
3. Ordering in a restaurant or fast-food place;
4. Shopping, asking to try on clothes; salesperson asking to help and asking about payment by charge, cash etc.;
5. Job interviews
6. Asking and receiving directions to go somewhere.

As a tutor for one student, you have an advantage because you can select or make up role-playing situations for exactly what your student needs. Role-playing can be especially valuable before any potentially stressful situation for your student.

OPEN-ENDED ROLE-PLAYING

Open-ended role-playing is represented farther up the triangle where it broadens, as the exercise is less predictable and gives more

space for variation. Students have already been exposed to the necessary vocabulary, but the actual situation is new, and sometimes a surprise. They do not see the dialogue before the role-playing. However, often the dialogue can be written down and discussed afterwards. As described in the chapter on Pattern Drills, I begin teaching beginners with a lesson on possessive adjectives (my, your, his, etc.). A very simple surprise role-playing that I might do the next lesson is the following: With a smile, I take the student's pencil from the table and say, "Oh, my pencil!" Then I look at the student and wait for a response. If they are struck dumb by surprise, I might facilitate the situation by saying the same thing to another student and wait for the response which is something like, "No, his pencil!" With only one student I might fake a confused look and assist the student by saying, "Is it my pencil, or is it your pencil?" As long as the student makes a response which gets the idea across, I don't correct it. However, I might continue to play with another student (perhaps taking a book) to further practice this give-and-take. When a student communicates that it doesn't belong to me, I give an exasperated shrug and hand back the item with an "Oh, okay." As you can see, this is not only a playful exercise, but also practice in assertiveness in the English language and a review of correct grammar structures. If the student is absolutely unable to respond, I give back the item with a smile then I either drop the exercise or draw pictures of characters and have them act out the situation.

Most open-ended role plays are not this personal. Many can be situations that are partially set up by the teacher to allow the students to decide some of the situations themselves. For example, in the doctor's office exercise already mentioned, the teacher might simply say that patients are in the waiting room. Then the students who are

Role-Playing

"patients" can decide what their problems are, and the "doctor" can decide whether to send the patient home with a prescription, or with none, or to the hospital. In one - on -one tutoring, you can take turns being the patient and doctor. Since beginning students have a limited amount of vocabulary, the role playing is actually not that unpredictable, but occasionally I have been surprised by a student with a sense of humor.

Lead-ins to this type of role-playing can also be done by pictures. Either one of the pictures shown below can be used to start a role-play. The teacher needs to explain that one of the persons is the boss and the other is the employee. Either the students or the teacher can make other observations about the picture (the time on the clock, etc.). Then the teacher asks one student to be the boss and the other to be the employee. Again, with only one student in the tutoring situation, the tutor also takes a role.

1.



2.



Open-ended role-playing could also be called spontaneous drama. The persons playing their parts think up their dialogue as they go along. After the role-playing is over, the teacher may, or may not, want to go over with the student what the correct English would have been. Sometimes it is enough just for the student to get his or her idea across. Some other possibilities for this kind of role-playing are:

1. In a shoe store, a customer is not satisfied with many pairs of shoes; you are the salesperson;
2. Someone breaks into line in front of you at the supermarket;;
3. Someone takes your purse on the bus and tells the driver it is hers (3 roles);
4. A policeman gives you a ticket for speeding (you were not going very fast).

STRATEGIC INTERACTION

Strategic interaction requires more detailed directions but often leads to greater variation in what happens. It facilitates empathy and understanding of both participants in the role-playing. Although strategic interactions require a fair amount of preparation and are usually done in classroom situations with students at the beginning level and above, you may want to use this technique as you become a more experienced tutor and as your student makes progress. The primary characteristic of strategic interaction is that the two participants wish for different conclusions to the drama.

An example of strategic interaction for beginning students might be about the closing time of a small grocery store. Person "A" is the storekeeper and person "B" wants to buy something from the store. The storekeeper ("A") has a very important appointment in a few minutes and will be in trouble if he or she is late. The customer ("B") has a baby, no car, and they are out of diapers. In this role-playing, both participants have good reasons for wanting different endings to the role-play.

After you know your student well, strategic interactions can be excellent lead-ins to conversations which are uncontrived and real reflections of what your student encounters and feels about different situations. They are basically about conflicts due to different needs: a salesman who may lose his job if he doesn't make more sales, a good

Role-Playing

friend who needs to borrow money, a teenage daughter who wants to behave like her American friends and not her Vietnamese parents. These are all examples of situations which can be developed into strategic interactions, where there is reason on both sides.

CONCLUSION

A variety of role-playing situations have been presented; you can probably think of others. For students who know very little English and who often feel helpless in very simple everyday situations, very structured role-playing can help with important survival skills. As the tutor, you are in an excellent position to help your student practice what he or she will actually have to do later on. In the event of an emergency or other unexpected situations, it may give them some piece of mind to know what to do and to have practiced it. Open-ended situations can be used to further empower the student and to review and build vocabulary skills. They are often entertaining and can be used to liven up a lesson on a day in which everyone feels unenthusiastic. Beginning students who know very little English may have some difficulties with strategic interactions, although I have used the "store" interaction in a low level class. Students from different cultures may have difficulty with the confrontational nature, since they may not be as assertive as Americans; if the students are ready, this may be a good opportunity to work on these skills.

Never underestimate the contributions of role-playing or think they are "just for fun." You would be amazed at how students can understand and write the correct responses, but be lost when they must speak to accomplish a goal. The more closely you and the students approximate the real situation, the better they will be able to transfer these skills to real life.

BASIC MATH SKILLS

by Harry Ringel, John Lobron and Jim Biles

INTRODUCTION

The primary objectives when teaching basic math skills to newly-arrived immigrants are twofold: to establish **fundamental literacy skills** in recognizing and implementing number use and to provide the learner with an understanding of **basic math skills within the context of everyday life.**

Familiarity with basic math concepts will differ greatly from person to person depending on an individual's level of literacy and the amount of exposure he or she has had to the daily business transactions which many of us take for granted. Using public transportation, filling a car's tank with gas, paying utility bills and going shopping, for instance, are among many tasks which we, as native speakers, consider boring and begrudged routines. However, to a newly-arrived immigrants, these tasks assume the status of stressful challenges which cannot be ignored with survival at stake.

Basic Math Skills

The first priority for the tutor should be to determine the extent of the student's math literacy skills – Does the student recognize simple numbers and understand their function? Can the student perform the four basic computational skills? Does the student recognize dates, times, money, telephone numbers and addresses?

This information can usually be obtained from the student's original placement test. If these competencies are not represented on the placement test, or if an original placement test is unavailable, the tutor should make an effort to assess the student's level of familiarity with basic math concepts during their initial meeting. This can be accomplished by designing a lesson plan (see Chapter VIII for details) that focuses on providing basic personal information in writing. The tutor can create a simple form that asks for address, age, telephone number and date. The student may need to improve his or her math literacy skills if unable to respond to these questions properly.

MATH LITERACY SKILLS

Individuals require basic literacy skills in order to read and write the English language. Literacy skills, in turn, require individuals to understand that letters and numbers are symbols, and that combinations of letters and numbers are used to convey meaning. Assuming that the student possesses the ability to form single digit numbers (as part of pre-writing skills -- see tracing exercise on page 60), the student needs to understand that the most basic function of numbers is to demonstrate quantities -- how many.

Example 1:



2



After mastering their numerical form, the student should learn the the written form of numbers as shown in Example 2. This drill can be conducted initially in writing, then orally:

Example 2:

6		eight
4		one
9		four
8		six
1		nine

Displaying order is another basic function of numbers. The tutor can create simple variations of Exercises 1 and 2 to assist the student in learning both the numerical and word form of ordinal numbers.

Once the student is familiar with cardinal and ordinal numbers, the tutor can focus on simple arithmetic skills. After establishing the meaning of related symbols (+, -, x, ÷), simple math skills can be practiced visually as follows:

Example 3:

$4 - 2 = \underline{\quad}$

$7 + 1 = \underline{\quad}$

The student will require a good deal of time and patience to master these skills. The tutor should make a habit of devoting a half an hour or forty-five minutes of every lesson to basic math skills. Do not rush the student; move on (from addition to subtraction, for example) when the he or she has achieved a basic mastery of the operation, and review one operation while teaching another.

Basic Math Skills

The final component of math literacy skills involves the use of simple numbers in the context of personal information, time, dates, money and simple measurements. At this stage, the use of props such as clocks, calendars, money and everyday measuring instruments (rulers, scales, etc.) is essential. The following exercise on *Understanding Time* provides a typical example of how these skills are taught:

UNDERSTANDING TIME

We all know that time is of the utmost importance. Remember, however, that time is culturally bound: different cultures have different levels of regard for the importance of time in their society. Many of us living in the United States complain that our lives are ruled by the clock.

As an elementary activity on understanding the meaning and importance of time, make a clock with your student. This may become one of the most important tools you use as a tutor. Materials you will need include scissors, a compass, a paper clasp, cardboard or construction paper and a magic marker or crayons.

1. Draw a circle (with a compass) on a piece of construction paper.
2. Write the 12 hours on the clock and five minute increments.
3. Cut out two hands (minute and hour).
4. Put a paper clasp through the two hands and fasten to the center of clock.

As you and the student construct the clock, explain the logic behind it -- minute and hour hand, 60 minutes equal one hour, 24 hours in one day, etc.). Using the clock show the student some simple routines and times: "I get up at 6:30." "I eat lunch at 1:00." Then have the student listen and show the appropriate time. After completing this exercise orally, the tutor can teach the numerical equivalent of time as follows in Example 4:

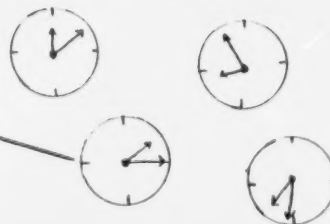
Example 4:

2:15

8:50

12:10

7:33



Subsequently, the tutor can create an exercise (Example 5) that allows the student to relate time in numerical and written fashion to the clock:

Example 5:

Use the clock to show what time it is.

1. 3:20
2. 11:45
3. 6:30
4. 4:18
5. Two thirty-seven

MATH-RELATED SURVIVAL SKILLS

Math-related survival skills build upon a student's basic math literacy skills; they frequently require the student to use his or her general knowledge in context. Typical examples include banking, using public transportation, paying bills, understanding schedules and reading maps. The tutor generally can teach these math-related competencies to low level students; however it is absolutely essential that the student master any and all math literacy skills associated with the competency beforehand. A prime example of this is **Using Public Transportation** which builds upon such basic math literacy skills as understanding ordinal and cardinal numbers, time, money, and addresses just to name a few.

USING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Many recent immigrants must depend upon public transportation to get from one place to another. This is an important skill to master if the student is expected to meet obligations such as work and medical appointments on a consistent basis. Look at a bus or train schedule with the learner. If the student recognizes it as a meaningful document, he or she will be motivated to learn how to use it.

After introducing the schedule and reviewing its basic format (times, map, route of the bus, number of the bus, etc.) with the student, the tutor is ready to ask some simple questions:

- Tutor: "Look at the first column of times on the left side of the schedule (pointing to the column). You see under Frankford Terminal, what is the first time shown here in the first column?"
- Student: "First time is 5:50."
- Tutor: "Yes, 5:50 a.m. 5:50 in the morning. If your bus, the 28 bus leaves Frankford Terminal at 5:50 a.m., what time does it arrive at Broad Street?" (Tutor moves finger over to the right. See the 7th column). "See. It's Broad Street".

Basic Math Skills

Student: "Bus arrives at _____." (time)

After questions about arrival and departure from both directions, discuss how the bus stops at only designated stops at specific corners. Point out how all of the possible bus stops are not listed on the schedule. the learner must recognize the need to gauge arrival at the bus stop from the nearest landmark noted at the top of columns.

Getting to as bus on time will not do your learner any good if he or she doesn't have the 'exact fare.' The tutor can simulate the interaction between bus driver and passenger through a role-playing exercise. A cigar box or plastic cup suffices for a fare box. The student is expected to have exact change when they board the bus. After reviewing several exercises that deal with identification of money and change, lay out a dollar or two worth of change on the table. The main task here is for the tutor to help the student identify a coin and its worth, then count out different combinations of coins until the student has come up with the 'exact change' required to board the bus.

THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

by Alison Roberts

INTRODUCTION

The Language Experience Approach (LEA) teaches students to relate their own experiences in English. It is a direct method of teaching students to express themselves. Although it is primarily an orally-based approach, it can be used effectively to generate reading, writing, and listening exercises as well. Because it uses the students' own lives as a resource, it encourages them to find their own vocabulary on their own initiative rather than memorize what vocabulary is set out them in, for example, a pattern drill. The student must find his or her own vocabulary to express personal experiences.

Initially, the Language Experience Approach will be difficult for the beginning student and must be prefaced with many examples. Since the student will not be able to respond with grammatical correctness, the tutor should concentrate more on expression of facts and ideas. Communication of meaning is the important lesson taught by this approach.

The Language Experience Approach

Relating personal information and experiences will help students develop language confidence that is vital for getting a job, securing housing, making friends, etc. It will help also to serve as a bridge between the student and the tutor, across which they can begin friendship and cultural exchange.

I use this approach in a variety of ways with a multi-cultural ESL class. I may ask my students to write about their experiences then use their stories as exercises for the whole class. I might also ask students to relate information about themselves orally. I ask them about their weekends and their lives and write their words on the board as they speak. We correct their sentences (minimally) as a class. I also bring in pictures and comics, and we create stories as a class.

The Language Experience Approach is extremely helpful in building the students' self-esteem. Students are happy to talk about their lives and show others that they have lives and skills beyond the often frustrating immigrant experience. They are proud of their stories and curious about their classmates. They enjoy creating dialogues and situations when we make group stories.

The first assignments are completed with short, simple sentences using what vocabulary the students already have. With practice, the stories become more complex, with new words taken from the dictionary to explain specific circumstances. Students teach new vocabulary to each other when we make or read stories together.

It is best to start with simple exercises when the student is very low level. The teacher should also be sensitive to starting with non-threatening areas of focus (such as food or basic facts about the student) before moving on to more revealing topics.

METHOD

- 1) Present the situation (around which the LEA activity will revolve) in whatever form you choose – a shared experience, pictures, sample stories to draw from, questions about a certain topic, etc.
- 2) Give the student plenty of time to respond orally.
- 3) Put the student's response into writing (if it is not a written assignment). You can write on a blackboard or piece of paper. You may choose to record your student's response for your own reference and not look at it together in written form.
- 4) If necessary, correct the student's response to the point that is understandable. If possible, the student should be the source of all corrections to ensure that comprehension is complete. The tutor need not correct every response if doing so entails major changes that will confuse the student. Sometimes a lot of corrections make the beginning level student feel that he or she will never be able to understand. However, a more advanced student may rise to such a challenge. You must be sensitive to your student and take care to keep his or her self-esteem intact if he or she is to benefit from the Language Experience Approach.
- 5) Using the student's mistakes as a guide, create or find exercises that practice whatever grammatical points with which the student has trouble. Follow-up exercises can also be used to reinforce student understanding of vocabulary words and story context. Your student's response thereby becomes the text for pattern drills, cloze exercises, etc.

The Language Experience Approach

Basic Patterning as Language Catalyst

The teacher can begin at a very basic level by presenting some simple phrases with examples.

Ask the student to substitute his or her own responses:

Example 1:

I like ice cream.
I like _____.
I like ice cream and cake.
I like _____ and _____.
I like ice cream and cake, but I don't like coffee and beer.
I like _____ and _____, but I don't like _____ and _____.
I am a teacher.
I am a _____.

Write your student's responses and go over them with your student.

Ask your student questions about himself or herself. You may offer your own responses as examples:

What's your name?
Where are you from?
Where do you live?
Are you married?
How many children do you have?
Do you like America?

On a piece of paper, write your student's responses. Use them as a guide to develop exercises for your next lesson. As stated, student errors can be used to design exercises for future lessons. For example, if your student answers "My name is Phan. I from Vietnam. I live Upper Darby," you can present him with the following cloze exercise with instructions to fill in the blanks:

Example 2:

My name _____ Phan. I _____ from Vietnam.
I live _____ Upper Darby.

Again, your own sentences can serve as examples: "My name is Alison. I am from the United States. I live in Philadelphia."

A Substitution Drill with Examples

A substitution exercise prefaced with a few examples shows different solutions:

Example 3:

I had a great weekend. The weather was beautiful. On Saturday, I went to the park and had a picnic with my family. On Sunday, I played soccer with some friends.

I had a good weekend. The weather was rainy. On Saturday, I stayed home and read a book. On Sunday, I went to a movie with my sister.

I had a terrible weekend. The weather was bad. On Saturday, my car got a flat tire when I was driving home. On Sunday, I had a bad headache and stayed in bed all day.

Ask the student to tell about his or her weekend. Give your student plenty of time to respond. Ask some general questions to elicit a response:

Did you have a good weekend?

How was the weather?

What did you do on Saturday?

What did you do on Sunday? etc.

Do not correct a one-word or short answer if it is conversationally correct. If your student has very limited English, do not correct an answer if it is understandable. Remember to keep questions simple and direct (How, What, Where, etc.), especially with students at this level.

The Language Experience Approach

Family Stories

This exercise will be difficult for the low-level student. I use it in a class of students who have already had a least three months of intensive English. Your student may not be ready for this exercise until you have worked together for some time. I do, however, find that even the least proficient students in my class enjoy this exercise and put a lot of time into it.

I begin to elicit family stories by showing sample stories from a book of oral histories. You can present examples from many different sources. A good place to find stories is your own family. You can relate the stories of friends, simplified stories from books, the newspaper, magazines, etc. A made-up story is also useful. Consider what information is needed in everyday situations and anything specific you may wish to know about your student's background. You may wish to direct your exercises toward family history, job experience, life in his/her native country, experiences on his way to the United States, or experiences in the United States.

Here are two sample stories I have used to elicit family histories:

Example 4:

My grandmother worked hard. She was a rice farmer. She was born in North Vietnam in 1908. She had five children, four boys and one girl. My mother was her only daughter. I loved my grandmother very much. She was always kind to me. She died when I was 10 years old.

When I was a child, my sisters and I helped my parents in their shop. Every morning, we got up very early and worked. We sold clothes, pencils, light bulbs, and many other things. After school, we went back to the shop and worked until dinner time. We learned many things in school, but our parents taught us about hard work and money.

After reading the stories together, explain any new vocabulary using simple English, drawings, gestures, or as a last resort, a dictionary. When the student has no more questions about meaning, ask him or her to tell or write about some aspect of personal life - - relatives, self, history, or experiences, either here or in the student's native country. Give the student plenty of time to compose the story.

I often give this exercise as a written assignment because I have a large class and try to give all of my students equal time. I correct the stories minimally, return them and then type and photocopy them. I use them as exercises to teach grammar such as the past tense, etc. With one or a few students, you will be able to devote some time to each assignment and may want to keep LEA texts as an on-going exercise. Here are some of my students' stories:

ASSIGNMENT: Write about your great-grandmother, grandmother and mother.

PHUNG LE

My great-grandmother was a farmer. She died when she was 80 years of age.

My grandmother is a housewife. She has three children.

My mother worked very hard, because my family was very poor.

ASSIGNMENT: Write about hard times in your life or the life of someone you know.

CUONG NGUYEN

Hard Times

That is my husband and me. We have four children together. We worked hard to feed our children. Now our children have grown up. My oldest child can help his father do something. Although he works hard, he is happy because he loves us, loves his family.

The Language Experience Approach

ASSIGNMENT: Write about your life in your native country and how and why you came to the United States.

VICTORIA VINOGRADSKA

When I lived in my country, I was hardworking and had a hard life because I was not a Communist. I had bad work and got very little money.

Our country was very poor, and all was very expensive.

I came to America because here it is very nice. The country is very rich, the people are good, and they give more money for work.

My children came to America because I came.

I have my students ask questions about each other's stories and then ask questions that are not answered in the stories. This is a great starting point for conversation. It is also an effective way of dealing with the students' cultures and cultural differences. Students are often well prepared to talk about the topics in their stories and those related to their stories from the research that went into their writing and the vocabulary they have adopted. Of course, we cannot talk extensively about complex topics, but facts, feelings and situations are related. On a basic level, we begin real dialogue.

Making Stories Together

At the bottom of each typed story assignment, I copy a simple comic strip from the newspaper. I read whatever dialogue (if any) there is and ask if the students have any questions. Usually, there is some kind of explanation that is helpful (identity the relationship of the characters, for example). I explain as little as possible to keep the students free from my ideas. We then, as a class, compose a written story for the comic. I write the story on the blackboard, and then the students read the complete corrected story aloud. Sometimes we

change the story from the present to the past tense to practice verb tenses. We then ask questions about the story.

In a tutoring situation with one or a few students, more attention can be paid to specific areas of difficulty. The tutor first writes the student's response word-for-word. At the next lesson, the teacher then follows up on grammar mistakes by creating different exercises that help the student to correct his or her own mistakes. As extensively as possible, the student should participate in the correcting process to ensure that comprehension is complete.

Common experiences, such as class excursions, can also be used as a basis for this kind of exercise. As the student relates the experience, the tutor writes the student's words. The tutor then focuses on the student's mistakes and teaches those structures. For example, the student may say:

Example 5:

I go post office. Buy stamp. Give money man. Go home.

The tutor then gives the student vocabulary and an exercise to correct the story.

Use these words to finish the dialogue:

I I to the to the stamps

I go _____ post office. _____ buy _____.

I give money _____ man. _____ go home.

The Language Experience Approach

CONCLUSION

Using the Language Experience Approach keeps the student's lesson focused on what the student wants and needs to learn. In sharing common experiences, the student is able to put his or her life into English, rather than learning to relate only what is taught. English is made accessible.

Working together to change thoughts into stories is very satisfying. Seeing their own words transcribed also has an empowering effect for the students. They see their words as active English communication, sometimes for the first time. Taking those words and helping the student discover how to communicate with them is, of course, what teaching English is all about. The Language Experience Approach does this very literally, with the learning process happening right in front of the teacher and student as written and spoken words are molded into understandable English.

I find that my students love to tell about themselves and their families. Many come from countries where recent wars or strife have changed their lives dramatically, and the experience of hardship is a common bond between them. Sharing stories brings our class together. It is enlightening for me to hear their stories. The Language Experience Approach reminds me that I am working with complex and diverse individuals whose limitations of language in no way indicate limitations of experience.

VIII. LESSON PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

A good lesson plan is a step-by-step blueprint of the objectives and/or competencies the tutor plans to achieve with the student; how the tutor plans to achieve the competencies (activities, techniques and practice); and what materials (props, worksheets, textbooks, etc.) will be needed.

Lesson plans are the final component of lesson preparation. In order to create a lesson plan, you have to know where your student is (assessment of needs and level), where he or she is going (goals), and what progress you plan for the student to make during the lesson (competencies or objectives).

Students, especially at a low level, are completely dependent upon the tutor to decide what material the student will learn and how the material or competency will be taught. The tutoring environment provides a controlled environment where language and literacy skills can be practiced and perfected. The tutor must decide beforehand the purpose of each lesson; language, vocabulary, grammar and sentence

Lesson Planning

structure must be controlled and limited to what is essential to achieve the student's goal or objective. The most important reason for lesson planning, therefore, is to meet the needs of your students as efficiently as possible. The lesson plan should be designed around the functional and tangible needs of the learner.

DEVELOPING A LESSON PLAN

Many a Journalism student will remember those five "W" questions that needed to be answered when writing a story: Who, What, When, Where, and Why. In much the same way, an ESL tutor needs to ask similar questions when developing and implementing a lesson plan:

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| WHAT - | What is the content of the lesson? Are you going to focus on reading, writing, listening or speaking skills? This can include the functional competencies and skills you want the student to master, as well as language and literacy skills. Often, more than one skill is taught at a given meeting. |
| HOW - | How do you plan to teach the student? This question includes activities, methodology and other materials such as worksheets, textbooks, props and field trips. |
| HOW LONG - | How long will it take you to teach each component of the lesson plan? It is usually advantageous to spend between 30 and 45 minutes on each component of the lesson. |
| WHY - | Why are you teaching this lesson? What is the learning objective? How does it relate to the student's needs and goals? By answering this question, you will make sure that you are continuing to follow a learner-centered approach with the student. |

Lesson planning should not be a complicated matter. In most instances, elaborate and detailed lesson plans are neither needed nor

practical. However, the tutor should keep a brief, accurate record of what has been planned for, and accomplished with the student. A notebook or legal pad will normally suffice for most lesson planning (as long as it is used exclusively for this purpose). The tutor should date each lesson and, at least in the beginning, write out the four questions.

The first step in planning a lesson is to determine **WHAT** the content of the lesson will be. If you are meeting with the student for the very first time, it is usually best to plan a more open lesson that allows tutor and student to get to know each other. If you have already met with the student, you need to review what was set out and accomplished during your previous meeting. This process is similar to reconciling a checkbook at the end of every month; after every lesson (or before the following lesson) the tutor should compare what was planned with what has been accomplished. It may be beneficial to begin your next lesson with a review of some of the material covered during your previous encounter(s). In any case, it is important that each succeeding lesson plan build upon what was mastered in previous meetings.

The next step is to decide **HOW** you will go about teaching the student. The tutor should plan a group of activities that reinforce the content of the lesson plan. Remember to maintain a balance of reading, writing, listening and speaking activities. Activities can be created by the tutor (see Chapter VII for basic ESL techniques and methodology) or found in textbooks and workbooks. It is also possible that a trip of some sort could serve as the most effective method of reinforcing the lesson plan. This flexibility of one-on-one tutoring is something that most teachers in group situations lack.

Lesson Planning

If the tutor plans to work with the student on a regular basis (once or twice a week, at the very least), a lesson plan that builds progressively on the skills and competencies taught in previous encounters is preferable. The tutor can utilize several meetings to develop the skills needed to achieve competence. It also becomes very easy to review prior work. If the tutor and student will meet irregularly or infrequently, a self-contained lesson plan is recommended. The objectives of the lesson can be completed within the time available at each meeting; the lesson plan does not depend upon what has been taught in prior meetings.

While deciding on the specific methods and activities to be employed in teaching the student, the tutor must be sure to consider the amount of time (**HOW LONG**) each component of the lesson will take. This decision will depend partly on the frequency and duration of tutoring encounters. Generally speaking, a half an hour or forty-five minutes are usually enough to present, practice and reinforce a competency. It is always preferable to practice and reinforce for shorter spans over a period of time than intensely once or twice. Also, by continually varying methods and activities, the tutor stands a better chance of maintaining student interest over the course of a lesson.

The last (and possibly most crucial) step involved in planning an effective lesson is to express the purpose or objective (**WHY**) of the lesson. In reality, the tutor should have at least a general idea of the lesson's purpose when deciding on the content of the lesson and how it relates to the client's needs and goals. In many formal lesson plans the objectives precede content and methods. Focusing on objectives also serves as an internal control by allowing the tutor to update continually progress towards, and changes in, the student's goals.

The following sample lesson plan deals with personal identification. It is an example of an lesson that is quite typical and appropriate for the first meeting of the tutor and a low level student:

Name	<u>Lan Thi Nguyen</u>		
Date	<u>5/10/93</u>	Lesson #	<u>1</u>
Content:	1) Simple greetings, basic personal information- name, age, nationality. 2) Telling time; keeping appointments.		
Activities :	1) Brief introduction of client with sponsor (speaking skills) 2) Preview of new vocabulary and grammar models 3) Pages 4, 5, and 6 in Survival English 2 (reading and writing skills) 4) Making a cardboard clock with the student; setting a time for next tutoring encounter.		
Time:	1) Personal Information (Introduction and work in textbook) - 30 minutes each. 2) Making clock; reviewing numbers and time - 45 minutes.		
Objectives:	1) First meeting with student. Establishing my identity and the student's identity; 2) Obtaining some background information on the student and his or her family. 3) Establishing the meaning of time and setting next appointment with student.		

CONCLUSION

By answering the four questions -- **WHAT, HOW, HOW LONG** and **WHY** -- the tutor can prepare a highly effective, uncomplicated lesson plan with a minimum of hassle. In most instances the tutor will need only one-half to one page of paper to prepare the lesson; some space should be left at the bottom of the page for comments or notes taken during or after the lesson.

Lesson Planning

Frequently, the most advantageous time to prepare your next lesson (especially if you meet with the student infrequently) is immediately after meeting with the student. The previous lesson will still be fresh in your mind; ideas will come more spontaneously, and planning will be much quicker. If you meet with the student on a regular basis, it is usually sufficient to prepare your lesson the night before. Try not to leave lesson planning for the last minute; when hurried, a tutor will frequently make mistakes or overlook important details. And remember -- your lesson plan won't be perfect the first time out. Like any skills, learning to devise effective lesson plans takes practice. It is an on-going process -- even seasoned instructors are constantly exploring new topics, trying out new methods, and weeding out (or modifying) those strategies which do not work for them. It is this process of continually refining lesson plans that makes teaching so worthwhile to instructors who are truly dedicated to the profession. As effective lesson strategies grow, so do the abilities of students.

Finally, the tutor should maintain a chronological file of lesson plans. When reviewed over a period of time, these lesson plans provide an excellent record of student activities and progress.

IX. OVERVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS

During the past two decades many English as a Second Language educators have placed an emphasis on a holistic or "whole language" approach to ESL instruction which integrates reading and writing skills with speaking and listening comprehension. "Whole language" instruction is learner-centered; students are encouraged to share their experiences with others students and the teacher. The basic teaching techniques and ESL methodology presented throughout *A Guide for the Volunteer Tutor* attempt to integrate learner-centered instruction and "whole language" strategies to the greatest extent possible.

Similarly, it is necessary for volunteer ESL tutors to view the tutoring experience in a more holistic fashion – as a series of inter-related, mutually-dependent parts. The tutoring of a limited English speaker is not limited solely to the instruction of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. It does not occur in a vacuum; it is not a static, but a dynamic process which presupposes a basic, concurrent knowledge of and interest in such diverse elements as cultural sensitivity, needs assessment (determining student needs), strategic planning (establishing realistic goals; lesson planning), ESL curriculum, development of assessment instruments (testing), basic

Overview and Conclusions

teaching techniques and ESL methodology. In short, a holistic approach to ESL tutoring requires the volunteer tutor to take a more active interest in the welfare of the student and to serve as a resource.

It is our hope that *A Guide for the Volunteer Tutor*, in conjunction with a comprehensive Tutor Training Program, will permit the first-time tutor to acquire the basic knowledge and skills necessary to assist low level limited English speakers in overcoming the barriers to literacy and self-sufficiency.

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A GUIDE FOR THE VOLUNTEER TUTOR
FINAL NARRATIVE

Prepared for the
Pennsylvania Department of Education

August 25, 1993

by

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The activity which is the subject of this report, was supported in part by the United States Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the United States Department of Education or the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and no official endorsement should be inferred.

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INTRODUCTION

Lutheran Children & Family Service (LCFS) is a not-for-profit church related agency devoted to improving the lives of families and children. LCFS serves approximately 4500 clients a year, 4000 of whom are recent refugees and immigrants. Although English as a Second Language (ESL) and other Adult Basic Education classes are offered through the Departments of Education and Public Welfare and serve more than 700 people a year, many clients are unable to attend classes for a variety of reasons. Since 1990 LCFS has offered tutor training workshops to place volunteers with those students who are unable to access centrally-located programs; approximately 100 tutors have been matched with students. Students are primarily low level limited English speakers; volunteers are generally first-time tutors.

In order to better prepare first-time tutors and to serve clients, LCFS solicited a PA353 grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education to develop and disseminate a tutor training guidebook that would form the core of a comprehensive 12-hour Tutor Training Program for the first-time tutors of low level limited English speakers. The book would also be made available to other area organizations in need of a tutor training resource for first-time tutors. The proposal for **A Guide for the Volunteer Tutor** was submitted to the Department of Education in March 1992 and approved.

Work on the guidebook began in July 1992. James Biles was chosen to serve as lead author; Harry Ringel agreed to provide

editing assistance and technical evaluation; instructors Jonna Detweiler, John Lobron, and Alison Roberts offered to contribute to the methodology section.

Written contributions were submitted monthly beginning in October to Jim Biles; they were reviewed and passed on to Harry Ringel for editing and suggestions. They were subsequently returned to the author for corrections and revisions. Each individual prepared at least three drafts of each section; final drafts of eighteen sections were eventually accepted for inclusion in the guidebook in May 1993. Alison Roberts also provided cover art work and Jim Biles handled layouts duties. **A Guide for the Volunteer Tutor** was printed and assembled in June and distributed to area organizations in July 1993.

Copies of **A Guide for the Volunteer Tutor** and this Final Narrative, as well as any additional information, may be obtained through the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Adult Basic and Literacy Education, 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17126 or the PA Department of Education Resource Center, Advance, at the same address listed above.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many recent refugees and immigrants are unable to take advantage of centrally-located ESL programs due to a variety of reasons: lack of transportation, family obligations, conflicting work schedules and eligibility requirements.

Lutheran Children & Family Service has offered ongoing tutor training to prepare volunteers to work with those students who are unable attend regularly scheduled classes or those who feel uncomfortable or inhibited in a classroom setting. Individual workshops and orientation sessions have been offered quarterly on such topics as lesson planning, cultural sensitivity, establishing goals, and ESL methodology.

A survey conducted by LCFS in December 1991 revealed that the vast majority of students receiving ESL instruction (71%) were low level literate and illiterate limited English speakers. In addition, the majority of volunteers were (67%) first-time tutors.

After reviewing the information obtained from the survey, it was decided that LCFS needed to offer a more structured, comprehensive tutor training program designed for inexperienced tutors and focusing on the needs of low level limited English speakers. It was decided that a 12-hour Tutor Training Program consisting of four components -- or modules -- would be developed; LCFS would approach the Pennsylvania Department of Education to seek funding for a tutor guidebook would would serve as the core of the program.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of **A Guide for the Volunteer Tutor** were two-fold:

1) To produce and disseminate a Tutor Training Handbook designed for first-time tutors working with illiterate and marginally literate students of limited English ability; and

2) In conjunction with the Tutor Training Handbook, the creation of a comprehensive, 12-hour Tutor Training Program that would enable volunteer tutors to serve as a more active resource for their students.

PROCEDURES

The Project Coordinator and Lead Author met several times before and after proposal approval to discuss possible subject material and topics for the guidebook. Much of the material considered had already been used in piecemeal fashion at tutor workshops offered by LCFS since 1990. Appropriate literature, as well as existing training resources for volunteer tutors, was reviewed. It was agreed that only the most basic and proven teaching techniques and methodology emphasizing learner-centered instruction should be included.

An outline of possible topics and a timetable were distributed to contributing staff during the summer of 1992. Topics were limited almost exclusively to methodology; it was thought that each instructor would be able to convey practical ideas and classroom experience which would be of benefit to first-time tutors. An

effort was made to avoid technical language and to provide tutors with case histories or real-life examples from each instructor's classroom experience.

Each of the three contributing authors was expected to select two topics. Jim Biles would be responsible for the remainder of the guide and initial editing; Harry Ringel would provide technical assistance and help with editing duties. In addition, one of the instructors, Alison Roberts, provided cover art work and help with drawings and the graphics.

It was decided in the earliest stages of development that the guidebook would include the following sections:

- 1) Cultural Considerations
- 2) Establishing Realistic Goals
- 3) Testing
- 4) Lesson Planning
- 5) ESL Methodology

In addition sections on ESL Curriculum, Determining Student Level, Basic Teaching Techniques, an introductory piece and an overview were added.

Each author was expected to submit rough drafts or progress reports on a monthly basis. In addition both group and individual meetings were held monthly. A final selection of 18 sections including the preface, bibliography and seven methodology pieces were selected.

At first the Project Coordinator and Lead Author has assumed that each chapter of the manual would be of equal importance to the

overall success of the guide. However, as instructors completed their initial drafts, it became evident that the methodology section would be the most interesting and important component of the guidebook.

Contributors submitted final drafts in May 1993. Sections were laid out, boxes and graphics were added as necessary. This procedure was expected to involve a minimum of hassle, however due to difficulties with the software package used, it required a substantial amount of time and energy.

All copying and printing was completed in June 1993. Binding of the guidebook and initial mailing of the final project occurred in July 1993.

RESULTS

In general terms the development and dissemination of **A Guide for the Volunteer Tutor** was a great success. It created a sense of accomplishment among the contributors and, more important, it has successfully addressed the need for a tutor training resource for inexperienced volunteers working with low level students. In addition, it addresses the needs of those recent refugees and immigrants living in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

In more specific terms, as a result of its 1992-93 PA353 grant, LCFS now possesses a resource to train volunteers to assist students in overcoming the barriers to literacy and self-sufficiency. In addition, the guidebook now forms the core of a comprehensive 12-hour Tutor Training Program designed to be

implemented not only at LCFS, but at any agency or site that wishes to undertake such a program.

EVALUATION

LCFS provided for both the internal and external evaluation of **A Guide for the Volunteer Tutor**. Internally, Mr. Harry Ringel provided technical assistance and served as an Internal Evaluator. Each chapter was reviewed by Mr. Ringel; any changes, suggestions or technical advice were incorporated into the final product.

Externally, other professionals in the field of ESL education were consulted on their opinions regarding many areas of the guide. Once again, any suggestions or criticisms were addressed before final publication. In addition, much of the material that ultimately comprised the tutor training guidebook was field tested in tutor training classes offered by LCFS in November, December (1992) and March (1993). This proved especially helpful in determining appropriate methodology pieces and allowed the author to work out any kinks before submitting a final draft.

DISSEMINATION

LCFS produced 200 copies of **A Guide for the Volunteer Tutor**. Many of these books will be used in conjunction with the tutor training services offered through the agency. However, starting in late July 1993, LCFS began mailing copies of **A Guide for the Volunteer Tutor** to agencies throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania offering Adult Basic Education, English as a Second

Language and tutor training services.

To date approximately 80 copies of the guidebooks have been sent to 50 agencies and organizations. LCFS will continue to distribute copies of **A Guide for the Volunteer Tutor** through September 1993. Any copies which remain undistributed will be sent to the Pennsylvania Department of Education Resource Center, AdvanceE, in Harrisburg. Any agency requesting additional copies of the tutor training guidebook will be referred to the AdvanceE Center.